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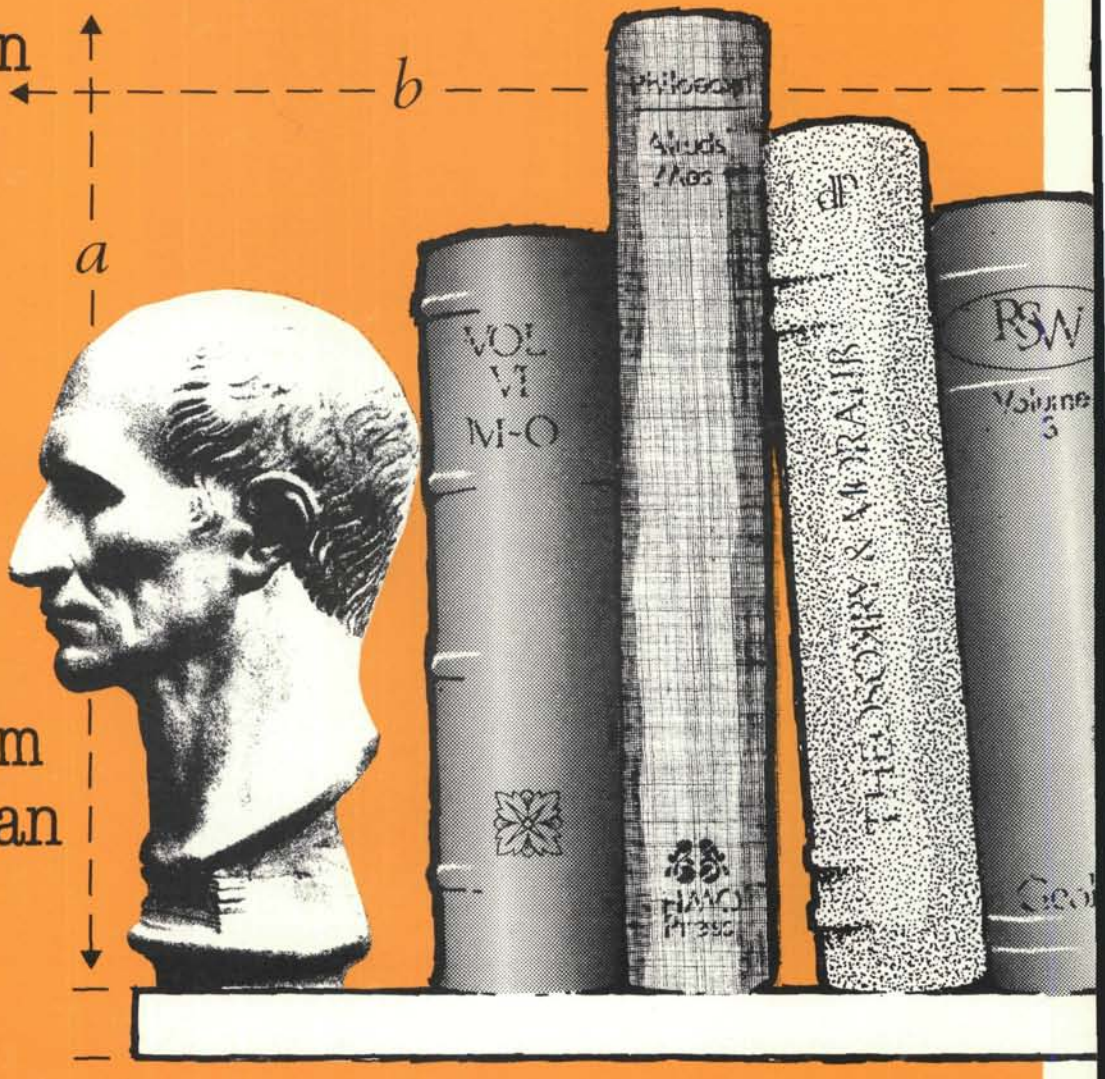

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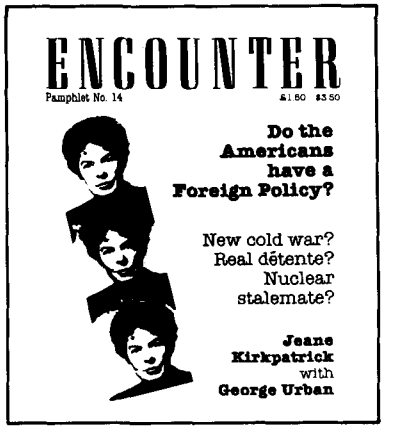

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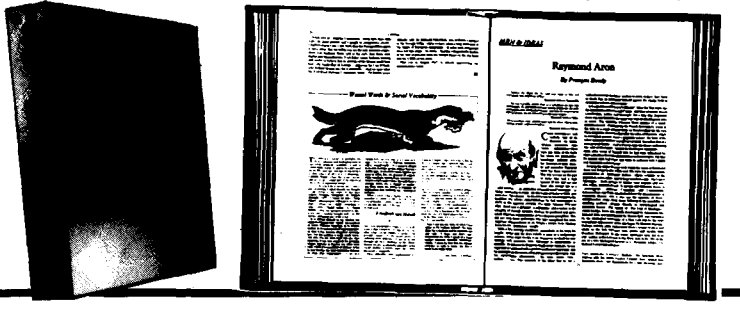

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and Richard Mayne

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MANAGING EDITOR
Margot Walmsley

ASSISTANT EDITOR
Bryan Healing

ADVERTISEMENT DIRECTOR
John Hall

ASSISTANT TO THE PUBLISHER
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CONTENTS

Music (*story*) — *William Trevor* — 3

The Incidental Thoughts of Marshall McLuhan — *John Wain* — 11

Column — *M* — 23

POEMS

John Mole 10, François Duchêne 25, Kevin Crossley-Holland 26, Anne Stevenson 27, Tim Dooley 74, Elizabeth Smither 77

MEN & IDEAS

Sidney Hook, Embattled Philosopher — *Nathan Glick* — 28

AMERICAN CHRONICLE

Of Presidents, & their Splendours & Miseries — *Max Lerner* — 33

NOTES & TOPICS

Draining Fleet Ditch — *Edward Pearce* — 40
"Kultura's Achievement" — *François Bondy* — 42
Paris Notebook — *Jean-François Revel* — 43

BOOKS & WRITERS

War in the Mind — *Geoffrey Best* — 48
Supreme Command — *Alan Campbell-Johnson* — 51
"The Real England" — *Jeffrey Richards* — 57
Military Leverage — *M. R. D. Foot* — 61
Books Encountered — *R.M.* — 64

REVALUATIONS

Karl Popper & the Jazz Age — *D. C. Stove* — 65

IN THE MARGIN

Do Ideologies Disintegrate? — *Melvin J. Lasky* — 75

BOXES

French Ideology: The Changing Landscape (*Sofres-Le Point*) 44

LETTERS 78 — AUTHORS 22 — LIFE & LETTERS 81

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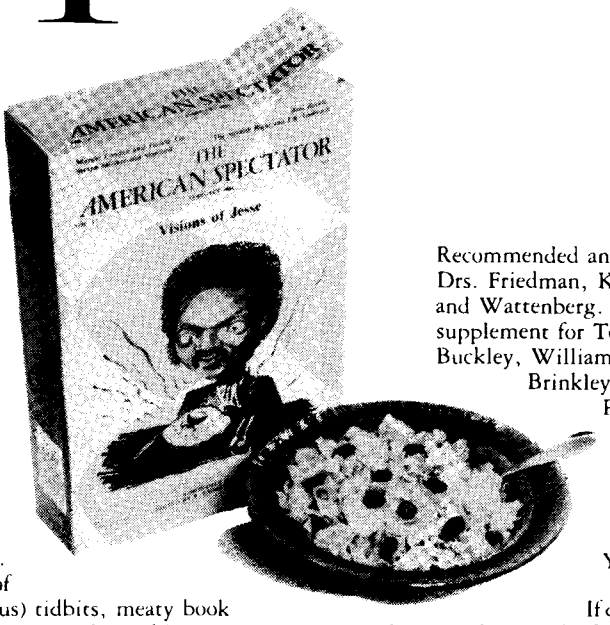

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William Trevor

Music

AT THIRTY-THREE Justin Condon was a salesman of women's undergarments, regularly traversing five counties with his samples and his order book in a Ford Fiesta. He had obediently accepted this role, agreeing when his father had suggested it to him. His father in his day had been a commercial traveller also and every Friday Justin returned to the house his father had returned to, arriving at much the same hour and occupying a room he had in childhood shared with his three brothers. His mother and his father still lived in the house, in the Dublin suburb of Terenure, and were puzzled by their youngest son because he was so unlike their other children, both physically and in other ways. His dark-haired head was neat; remote, abstracted eyes made a spherical, ordinary face seem almost mysterious. At weekends Justin took long walks on his own, all the way from Terenure to the city, to St Stephen's Green where he sat on a seat or strolled among the flower-beds, to Herbert Park, where he lay in the sunshine on the grass: people had seen him and remarked upon it. He had never in his life been known to listen to the commentary on a hurling match or a Gaelic match, let alone attend such an event. When he was younger he had come back one Friday with a greyhound, an animal he had proceeded to rear as a pet, apparently not realising that such creatures had been placed in the world for the purpose of racing one another. "Ah, poor Justin's the queer old flute", his father had more than once privately owned in McCauley's public house. His mother wished he'd get married.

Justin's reason for remaining in his parents' house had not been shared with them, although it was a simple one: he considered that any other dwelling would be of a temporary nature and not worth the nuisance of moving to because one day he would leave, not just the suburb of Terenure, but Dublin, and Ireland, for ever. He would leave his samples in the Ford Fiesta; he would leave the Ford Fiesta in a lay-by. He was not truly a purveyor of garments in imitation silk, his destiny was not the eternal entering of drapers' shops. He would escape as others had escaped before him, James Joyce he thought of particularly in this respect, and Gauguin. He liked the photograph of James Joyce in the broad-brimmed black hat, with the black coat reaching to his ankles; Gauguin had been an ordinary businessman. When Joyce had left Ireland he'd had to borrow a pair of boots. Later he'd tried to sell tweed to the Italians.

Dwelling on such matters, Justin watched the light of a May morning from a bed in Co. Waterford. There wasn't much to see: streaks of brightness along the edges of the drawn curtains, the ceiling of the bedroom mistily illuminated through rosy fabric. A man called Fahy, travelling in fertilisers, had assured him that when he stayed in this house he occupied the bed of Mrs Keane, its widowed landlady. When Garda Foley, who lodged on a more permanent basis in the house, drank his eleven o'clock Bournville and stated his intention of retiring for the night, Fahy would rise from the kitchen table also, saying he'd had a long day. He would mount the stairs a few paces behind Garda Foley and in full view of the policeman would enter the bedroom known as the "overnight room" because it was set aside by Mrs Keane for her casual trade among commercial travellers. Garda Foley, long since retired from the force, a lifelong bachelor, was a moral presence in Mrs Keane's house, a man who could be relied upon by Canon Tighe or Father Reedy, selflessly working behind the scenes for the Legion of Mary and organising the tug of war at the Nore Fête every Whit. Fahy said he gave him a quarter of an hour and then listened on the landing to the depth of his snoring. He smoked a final cigarette in the overnight bedroom, taking a good ten minutes over it, before listening again at the panels of Garda Foley's door. If the rhythm of sleep had not altered, he made his way to the bed of Mrs Keane.

Justin supposed it was true. With some precision, Fahy had described the body of the widow, a woman of fifteen stone and in her sixty-first year. The hair that was grey about her head sprouted blackly and abundantly, according to the traveller in fertilisers, on other areas of her. Buttocks and stomach were vast; Hail Marys were repeated after sinning.

In the overnight room Justin imagined without pleasure the scenes Fahy described. Fahy was a little runt of a Dublin man, married with five or six children, always sticking his elbow into you to make a point. Sometimes in his ramblings he mentioned Thomasina MacCarthy, the dentist, who was the only other lodger in Mrs Keane's house. She had a great notion of Justin,

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Fahy insisted, the implication being that Justin could easily arrive at the same arrangement with Thomasina MacCarthy as he himself had arrived at with Mrs Keane. No man was an island was a repeated observation of Fahy's.

Justin rose in order to break his train of thought, and crossed to the window. He drew back the curtains and stood in his pyjamas looking out at the line of houses across the street. No blind had yet been released, no curtain or shutter opened. A cat crept along the grey pavement, interested in the empty bottles outside each door. The houses themselves were colour-washed in pink or cream, in yellow, grey or blue, their halldoors painted in some contrasting shade, or grained. The street was wide, with lamp-posts between every second house, and a single visible telegraph pole. Just visible also, where the street met another as it curved away to the left, was Hayes's shop, which traded in newspapers, tobacco and confectionery. The sight of it, with its hanging PLAYERS PLEASE sign, reminded Justin that he was in need of a cigarette himself. He left the window and crossed to the bedside table.

Inhaling, he slipped out of his pyjamas and dressed himself in shirt and trousers, preparatory to making his way to Mrs Keane's bathroom. Still intent on keeping Fahy's reports and innuendoes at bay, he dwelt upon his earliest memory, which was of the leg of a chair. That same chair was still in the house in Terenure and he often found himself looking at it, his eye travelling down one particular leg, to the rings cut into the timber, the varnish worn partially away. With three brothers and three sisters, he had grown up the baby of the family, surrounded by people who shouted more than he did, who were for ever arguing and snatching. At school the textbooks were inkstained and dirty, the blackboards so pitted you could hardly read the chalk marks on them, the desktops slashed with messages and initials. "Come here and I'll show you", Sha McNamara used to whisper; and forcibly he'd insist, no choice about it, on displaying the promise of his sexuality. Ikey Breen had been paid a threepenny piece by a woman under cover of darkness in the Stella Cinema. All Riordan's jokes had to do with excrement.

Justin shaved in Mrs Keane's bathroom, hurrying to finish before Garda Foley came rattling at the door. Long before he began to go to school he remembered his father driving away from the house in Terenure on a Monday morning. His father had taught him how to strike a match, and would let him hold it over the tobacco in his pipe while he sucked at the smoke, making a bubbling noise. His father used to take him on to his knee and ask him if he'd been a good boy, but Justin always had to turn his head away because of the whiff on his father's breath. The stench of stout, his mother said it was, bottle after bottle of stout that made the whole house stink like a brewery. He associated his father particularly with Sundays, with leading the family into Mass, with saying he was starving on the walk back home. Sunday dinner was different from ordinary dinner, always meat and a pudding. Afterwards his father had his bath, with the door of the bathroom open so that he could listen to whatever sporting commentary there was on the radio. Justin's sisters were forbidden to go upstairs at this time in case they'd catch a glimpse from the landing. His brothers roller-skated in the yard.

Justin washed the remains of the shaving foam from his face. It was on a Sunday that his Aunt Roche had first put a record on her gramophone. John Count McCormack singing *The Rose of Tralee*. After that he had begun to visit her sitting-room regularly, a room full of ferns in pots and framed embroideries. It was she and Father Finn who had given him faith in himself and in his musical aptitude, who hadn't laughed when he'd hinted that Mahler was his hero.

He dried his face and left the bathroom. Somewhere in the house he could hear the heavy tread of Garda Foley. The smell of frying rashers and the chatty voice of a radio disc-jockey drifted from the kitchen.

"Mr Condon!" called Thomasina MacCarthy. "Mr Condon, Mrs Keane has the breakfast ready."

IN HER TINY SITTING-ROOM she dusted the ornaments on the mantelpiece, the brass gondola, the tuskless elephants, the row of trinket containers, the framed photograph of Justin as a child, specially taken by Mr Boland the insurance man, whose hobby was photography. She was not really his aunt: when he was six, he had stood by the railings of her front garden, staring at her while she cut the grass. "What's your name?" she'd asked, and he'd said it was Justin Condon. "Ah now, isn't that a great name?" She'd smiled at him, knowing he was shy. Her face had been damp with perspiration due to the exertion of pushing the lawnmower. He had watched her closely while she took her glasses off and wiped them on her apron.

She was a slight, frail woman of seventy-nine, with thin hands, and hair the colour of the ashes she now carried in a cardboard box from her sitting-room. She moved slowly, suffering a little from arthritis in one of her knees and in her arms. "I think I have some Mi-Wadi", she'd said that first day. "D'you like Mi-Wadi lemonade, Justin?"

He had followed her into the house and in the kitchen she had poured an inch or two of Mi-Wadi into two glasses and filled them with water from the cold tap. She'd found some biscuits, raspberry wafers she'd bought for the weekend. He had three brothers and three sisters, he said, his father was in business and was never at home during the week. When he was older he told her about the Christian Brothers' School, the white-painted windows and the rowdy, concrete playground. He said that Brother Walsh had picked him out as someone who was useless.

The Sunday when she'd wound up the gramophone and put on the record of John Count McCormack was a

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special memory for her because she always thought of the occasion as marking the beginning of his interest in music. Later she had played him her selected arias from *La Traviata* and *Carmen* and *Il Trovatore*—on the same Sunday in September when he had posed for Mr Boland in the garden. He'd had to stand in front of the hydrangea bush, but Mr Boland hadn't been happy with that so he'd had to sit on a chair on the front-door step. In the end the photograph had been taken against the rose trellis.

"Well, that's disgraceful!" Father Finn had said on another Sunday, when he heard how a Christian Brother had described the child as useless.

"THAT'S A RIGHT BIT of bacon", Garda Foley complimented Mrs Keane. "Isn't bacon in this country a greatly improved commodity?"

Neat as a napkin across the table from him, Thomasina MacCarthy smiled shyly at Justin, as if they shared some private opinion. Justin pretended not to notice. He bent his head over the bacon on his plate, over the slices of black pudding and the fried bread and the egg. Garda Foley would think Stravinsky was the name of a race-horse and so would Mrs Keane. "Ah, sure, I knew all right", Thomasina would protest, lying because she couldn't help herself. Her two prominent front teeth were like an advertisement for her trade; her eyes were prominent also, her nose and chin slight. She wore clothes in pastel shades, pale blues and pinks and greens. Like himself, she returned every weekend to Dublin, to stay with her parents.

"It's a sign of the advance the country has made", continued Garda Foley, "the way the bacon is better these days."

"The price of it would murder you", Mrs Keane reminded him.

He nodded and continued to nod, dwelling on that. "Well, isn't it another sign in that case", he suggested eventually, "the way the people would have the means for it?"

"Nearly a pound a pound. Sure, it's a holy disgrace."

Mrs Keane's dining-room was heavy with furniture: rexine-covered chairs, a large ornate sideboard, a great mahogany dining-table, wax fruit on occasional tables, armchairs with antimacassars, pictures of forest scenes. Bottles of sauce stood on the sideboard, and empty decanters, and a pile of table-mats. Shells decorated the mantelpiece, and small cups and saucers, gifts from Tramore and Youghal.

"Well, it's the same way that's in it with everything." The policeman's delivery of this statement was ponderous, the words punctuated by the munching of his jaws. He was a match for Mrs Keane in size, his rounded hill of a stomach tightly engaging the buttons of his waistcoat. A bulbous nose was set carelessly in a crimson countenance, short hair was as spiky as a hedgehog's.

"Wouldn't you say the prices is shocking?" Mrs Keane enquired of Thomasina MacCarthy, in a voice that insisted women knew best.

"Ah, they are of course."

Garda Foley turned to Justin, a piece of egg, already dipped in mustard, on the end of his fork. "Have they inflation beat? Fahy was here last week and said inflation was beat."

Justin shook his head. He didn't know, he said. He'd heard somewhere that, far from being defeated, inflation was gaining ground.

"Has your father a word to say on it? I remember a thing about your father when he used to stay with us here. He had a keen sense of politics."

"I don't think I heard him mention inflation."

"Give him a message from me, will you? Tell him Garda Foley was asking for him."

"I will of course."

"Oh, Mr Condon, I meant to tell you: I saw you in Stephen's Green on Sunday." Thomasina MacCarthy's two large teeth announced interest in him; the eyes blinked rapidly. Her pastel-green suit was trim on her trim form; he imagined her fingers, trim also, in a patient's mouth.

"I'm often in Stephen's Green."

"I thought you lived in Terenure, Mr Condon."

"I walk into the city."

"God, I love walking."

The fingers, in a hurry, would layer a gum with cotton-wool; sharply, they'd jab a hypodermic needle home. She'd talk to you when your mouth was full of implements; she'll tell you to have a wash-out with the pink stuff, and say she was nearly finished. Fahy said she had an eye on a bungalow out on the Cappoquin road. "Wouldn't the two of you be snug in a bed there?" Fahy had said.

"I have a few friends coming in, Saturday fortnight. Would you care to join us, Mr Condon?"

He felt a tightening in the atmosphere. Both Garda Foley and Mrs Keane were aware of the implication of what had just been said. An attempt was being made to develop the casual acquaintanceship that existed between Justin and the dentist in Mrs Keane's house; the relationship was to be extended to Dublin. Fahy would be told; so would Canon Tighe and Father Reedy. "Sure, if some girl like Thomasina MacCarthy doesn't do something about it that fellow'll be a bachelor at seventy": he could hear Mrs Keane saying that, or his father or his mother. Fahy would put it differently.

"Saturday fortnight?"

"About a quarter to eight, Justin. You know Clontarf? 21 Dunlow Road. Just a few friends and a bit of dancing."

"I don't dance at all."

"I'm not much at it myself."

Garda Foley and Mrs Keane were pleased. They had enjoyed this flutter of excitement. They would think about the party at 21 Dunlow Road, and discuss it.

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They would be unpleasantly agog after it had taken place.

"21 Dunlow Road", Thomasina MacCarthy repeated, writing it clearly on a piece of paper she'd found in her handbag.

"You might ask him that", requested Garda Foley. "Does he consider inflation beat? If there's one man in Ireland would know, it's your father."

Justin nodded again, finishing the fried food on his plate. He promised to discuss the matter with his father and to obtain his father's opinion. He wouldn't turn up at 21 Dunlow Road, he said to himself. When he next spent a night at Mrs Keane's he'd say he lost the address.

WHEN HE WAS TEN she had asked him if he'd like to learn how to play the piano and when he'd said yes she'd arranged for Father Finn to give him lessons in her sitting-room. She had paid for them and when she'd asked him not to tell his family he had eagerly agreed because apparently his family would have laughed at the idea of a boy playing a musical instrument. "It's a great thing for him", Father Finn had later reported. "And hasn't he a rare aptitude for it?" In the circumstances Father Finn wasn't averse to keeping the knowledge of the lessons from the Condons, and after a while he refused to accept any fee for the tuition. "Well, that's one thing at any rate he's not useless at", he remarked, later still.

God had arranged it, she often thought during those years that went by. God had arranged for the child to come by her gate that first afternoon, and for the music she played him on her gramophone to delight him. God had arranged a way for the three of them, Father Finn and herself and Justin. When the Condons had eventually discovered about the piano lessons they'd been bewildered but not cross, mainly because it was Father Finn who was giving them. And as well as the piano lessons every Wednesday Father Finn began to come round on Sunday afternoons and they all three listened to John Count McCormack or the operatic arias. It was a natural thing for the priest to do since everyone knew now of the musical aptitude of Justin Condon and how it needed to be fostered and encouraged.

THE SUN WARMED his exposed chest; beside him his shirt was laid out on the grass; his eyes were closed. Faintly the sound of the river by which he lay penetrated his sleep.

He dreamed of the queen who had inspired the choral symphony he was attempting to write. In his dream she trailed wolfhounds on leather thongs through her garden and listened to the spirits of the otherworld. From among them one took visible form: a young girl rose from the mists and the flowers and warned the queen of her folly.

Two flies tormented Justin's plump chin. Their tickling silenced music that had the resonance of music composed by Mahler. He smacked at his face but already the flies had gone.

The symphony told of a journey from the royal palaces in the West to the territory of Cuchulainn in Ulster. The queen's great army, fattened with the soldiers of her allies, with the long line of camp-followers, with druids and jesters, story-tellers, soothsayers, military men and servitors, travelled into heroic battle, while the mystical hero awaited their arrival. Sometimes, on Saturdays, Justin hired a piano cubicle in a music shop and spent the morning there, advancing his composition. Shortly after the death of Father Finn the piano in his Aunt Roche's sitting-room had gone hopelessly out of tune and apparently couldn't be much improved.

Justin reached for his shirt. When he had buttoned it he neatly tightened the knot of his tie. Since breakfast-time in Mrs Keane's dining-room he had visited sixteen drapers in seven different towns. He had O'Leary's and Mahoney's to call on yet, and then that would be that for the day. He drove on and did the business he had to do. He spent the night in Dungarvan in a room above a fish-and-chip café. The smell of the frying wafted up and through his open window. From his bed he listened to people talking about the film they had been to, and to a drunk man who proclaimed that he intended to stand no nonsense from his wife. He fell asleep at half-past eleven and dreamed of the journey in his symphony, of the queen in her magnificence, and the chorus of otherworld spirits.

"Wait now till I get the brother", said Mr McGurk, the joint proprietor of McGurk's Arcade, the following day. He left the shop and called up through the house. In a moment the older Mr McGurk appeared.

Justin's samples were laid out on the counter. Some were familiar to the McGurks and presented no problem when it came to deciding the size of the order. Others, lines that were new this spring, had to be considered with care.

"Would a woman of this area dress herself in that?" enquired the younger Mr McGurk, poking at a black garment trimmed flimsily with lace of the same colour.

"I don't know would she."

"The gusset is strong", Justin pointed out, since it said so on his sales sheet. "A man-made fibre."

"It isn't the gusset would sell that article", replied the older Mr McGurk. "What I'm thinking is, is it too ritzy for this area?"

"Will we call down Eileen?" suggested his brother.

"I'd say we would."

Eileen, the wife of the older Mr McGurk, was summoned from the house. She picked up the garment in question and meticulously examined it.

"Would you wear it?" her husband demanded.

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"I would in a shade of peach. Does it come in a peach?"

Justin said it did, and in a shade of coffee.

"Order it in the peach", advised Mrs McGurk. "Black's not the tone for stuff the like of that."

"Too ritzy", agreed her husband. "I'm just after saying it."

"How's your father?" Mrs McGurk asked Justin.

"He's grand."

"Has he still got the hilarious way with him?"

Justin replied that he supposed his father had. One after the other, the McGurk brothers said they'd never laughed at any traveller's jokes the way they'd laughed at Justin's father's. Justin could feel them thinking that he himself wasn't half the man his father was, that he didn't enter into the spirit of things, that all he seemed concerned with was writing down orders in his book. "I'll tell you a thing about Thomasina MacCarthy", Fahy had said. "She has a notion of making a man of you. There's women like that around."

He left McGurk's shop and drove out to the estuary. He walked by the green, sea-weedy water, wondering if Mahler would have composed a note if he'd been incarcerated in a bungalow on the Cappoquin road, listening every night to talk about cavity-linings.

"NOW, THERE NEVER WAS", she remembered Father Finn saying when Justin was thirteen, "a great man of music that came out of Ireland."

He made the pronouncement while eating a slice of buttered toast she had prepared for him. She had loved doing that, toasting the bread and spreading the butter on it, arranging blackcurrant jam in a glass dish. Blackcurrant was Father Finn's favourite, raspberry was Justin's.

"We had singers and harpists. We had all classes of instrumentalists. We have a proud tradition, but we never yet had a composer that could rank with the Germans. To this day, Justin, we have to turn to Germany for musical composition."

Pouring tea for both of them, she mentioned Italy and the priest agreed that the Italians had made a contribution. He told the story of Puccini's life. He referred to the burden of a musical gift and to the reward it brought with it in time. "A precious freedom of the spirit. A most glorious thing."

She had delighted in listening to him. She was never happier than on those Sunday afternoons when he and Justin sat together by her fire or on the Wednesdays when she made a cup of tea after the piano lesson. No admission of affection had ever been made by the priest or by herself; no admission could be. Until Justin arrived in her life there had been no way of creating a relationship that went beyond that of priest and parishioner.

"There's a little thing Justin composed for me", Father Finn said one Sunday. "A short little piece, but I'd say it displayed promise."

"WE HAD A COMPLAINT, Mr Condon", Miss Murphy reported in Castlemartyr. "We had this slip brought back to us after it fell into holes."

Only Thomasina MacCarthy and Miss Murphy called him Mr Condon, Thomasina MacCarthy because any other mode of address might have sounded forward, Miss Murphy for reasons he had never been able to fathom.

"Would it be the way it was washed, Miss Murphy? Was it put into a machine?"

"Oh, it would have been washed all right, Mr Condon. Naturally you'd expect it to have been washed."

"No, I mean in a machine though. Or maybe it got boiled in error. It's all tinged with blue, look. Some blue garment has run into it."

"It would save an argument with the customer, Mr Condon, if you replaced it. It's good for business when something gets replaced."

Justin made a note in his order book and said that Miss Murphy would have a replacement within a fortnight. He had a new line he wanted to show her, he added, and displayed for her the sample he had displayed for fifty-seven other drapers, including the McGurks, since he'd left Dublin. Miss Murphy picked it up gingerly.

"It comes in a peach, Miss Murphy, and a coffee. The gusset is guaranteed sturdy. Man-made fibre."

"I never saw that type of cut before."

"It's the fashion in Dublin."

Miss Murphy shook her head. She folded the piece of clothing in a professional manner and Justin returned it to the suitcase in which he carried his samples. Miss Murphy ordered a supply of summer vests and made arrangements to replenish her stock of first-communion stockings. "Is your father fit?" she asked as Justin closed his order book, and for the first time since he had known Miss Murphy it idly occurred to him that she and his father might have had the same relationship as Fahy claimed to have with Mrs Keane. Miss Murphy was elderly now, a woman with a face like an arrow, with spectacles on a chain. Once she might have been pretty; it was odd that she had never married.

"He's grand", Justin said.

"Remember me to him, will you?"

Her tone was different from Garda Foley's when he mentioned Justin's father, different from the McGurks' and all the other drapers'. Had there always been a hint of bitterness in Miss Murphy's voice when she sent this message to his father? He looked up from the suitcase he was fastening and found her eyes upon him. They held his own until he felt embarrassed. He had noticed

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before that there was a similarity between his father and Fahy. They were both small men, rotund, bald-headed, pink-skinned, given to banter. He snapped the clasps on his suitcase and Miss Murphy turned away to attend another customer.

SHE MADE A CAKE, the banana cake he liked. Usually she wrapped in tin-foil what remained of it after their Sunday tea and he took it away to eat during the week, on his travels. She enjoyed thinking of him eating the cake, sitting out in the sunshine as he liked to do, in some quiet place.

Slowly she chopped up two bananas. He had belonged to them as he never had to his parents. On Sunday afternoons and again on Wednesdays they had been a family.

She left the kitchen and in her sitting-room she delicately placed the needle on the same worn record of John Count McCormack singing *The Rose of Tralee*. Soon she would die, as the old priest had, six months ago. She would fall down, or she would die in her sleep. And before any of it happened she might become muzzy in her thoughts, unable to explain to Justin Condon and properly to ask for his forgiveness. Father Finn had known also in the end, death banishing his illusions. "We did a terrible thing", the old priest had said, sending for her specially.

The record came to an end and she sat there for a moment longer, listening to the scratchy sound of the needle. She had once, long before the child had come into her life, tried to become Father Finn's housekeeper. "Ah no, no", he had murmured, gently rejecting her because it wouldn't have done.

"AND HOW WERE THINGS in West Waterford?" his father enquired. "Has Joe Bolger retired from Merrick's?"

Glistening, as if he had just scrubbed his face with a nailbrush, Mr Condon held a glass of whiskey in his right hand. As well as his face, the backs of his hands glistened, as did his glasses, his even false teeth, the dome of his hairless head. Justin imagined him with Miss Murphy in her shop, telling a joke, driving out into the country with Miss Murphy when it was dark, the way Fahy said he'd had to with some woman in Claremorris before he got going with Mrs Keane.

"I didn't see Joe Bolger", Justin said. "I think maybe he's retired."

"I always liked West Waterford."

They were in the sitting-room. His father was standing in front of a coal fire that was too hot for the time of year. In the kitchen Justin's mother was frying their evening meal. Recently Mr Condon had taken to giving himself a glass of whiskey at a quarter to six in the evening instead of making his usual journey to McCauley's at the corner. When he'd eaten his food he returned to the sitting-room and occupied the chair nearest the television, pouring himself another glass of whiskey at a quarter past seven. Justin's mother said the whiskey was bad for him but he said it was doctor's orders. "It's ready for you", she shouted from the kitchen, reminding Justin of Thomasina MacCarthy calling out in Mrs Keane's that the breakfast was ready.

"I could eat an elephant", said Mr Condon, swallowing the last of his whiskey.

Between them, his brothers and sisters had brought thirty-seven children into existence: Justin often thought of that. At Christmas they all crowded into the house, shouting and quarrelling and reminding Justin of what the house had been like in his childhood. On Saturdays there were visits from one or other of those families, and on Sundays also.

"There was a time I was below in Dungarvan", Mr Condon recalled in the kitchen, "the day Golden Miller won at Fairyhouse. Joe Bolger was footless behind the counter."

Mrs Condon cut slices of loaf bread, and pushed the butter past her husband in Justin's direction. Mr Condon had never been known to pass anyone anything.

"God, you'd have died laughing." As if to lend greater verisimilitude to this claim, Mr Condon laughed rumbustiously himself, exposing egg and bread partially chewed. "He was handing out skeins of wool and not charging for it. He gave a gross of safety-pins to a farmer's wife by the name of Mrs Quinn. 'Sure, aren't they always handy', he said, 'in case you'd have something falling down?' "

Mrs Condon, who did not always care for her husband's humour, asked what the weather had been like down the country. Justin replied that it had been fine.

"There was another time", Mr Condon went on, "when the boys in the digs took poor Joe's clothes when he was asleep in bed. I didn't see it myself but didn't he have to descend the stairs with the sheets on him?"

"It rained on Wednesday", Mrs Condon said. "It didn't cease the whole day."

"There wasn't a drop down the country."

"Well, isn't that strange?"

"It's often that way."

"They say it's settled in Dublin for the weekend."

Mrs Condon was as thin as his Aunt Roche, with a worried look that Justin couldn't remember her ever having been without. She wore flowered overalls even when she went shopping, beneath her black coat.

"The wildest lads in West Waterford was in Joe Bolger's digs", continued Mr Condon. "There wasn't a trick they didn't have knowledge of."

Justin, who had heard about these exploits in West Waterford before, nodded. Mrs Condon poured more tea.

"They went into the Bay Hotel one night when a pile of boxes containing young chickens had just come off

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the bus. Your men had them released in the hall before anyone could lift a hand. They had them flying up and down the stairs and into the dining-room, knocking down the sauce bottles. The next thing is, didn't they have them fluttering about the bedrooms?"

"You told us, Ger", Mrs Condon said.

"I did of course. Didn't I come back that Friday and go through the whole thing? It could kill you stone dead to wake up in your bedroom and find chickens squawking all over you."

"It must have been unpleasant certainly."

"Well, that's West Waterford for you. Are you still telling that story, Justin?"

Justin nodded again. He wouldn't have known how to begin telling such a story, and he had never attempted to. He thought about the symphony, hearing the theme that the queen and her consort in their palace bed had inspired. A slow movement, lyrical in tone.

"Is that girl still stopping at Mrs Keane's?" his mother enquired. "The dentist."

He'd once mentioned Thomasina MacCarthy in order to fill a gap in some conversation; he wished he hadn't because his mother had somehow sensed his apprehension and appeared to have mistaken it for interest.

"Yes, she's still there."

"Sounds a nice type of girl."

Fortunately, Mr Condon had begun to laugh in anticipation of some further antics on the part of the lodgers in Joe Bolger's digs. When his laugher ceased he retailed them, as he had many times done so in the past. Obediently Justin and his mother laughed in turn.

"There was a curate from Milecross", Mr Condon said, "a Father Dolan. Well, the lads in the digs had him tied in knots."

"You told us about Father Dolan, Ger."

"He was down at his tea and when he went upstairs there wasn't a stick of furniture left in the room. They had the bed and the wardrobe carried out, and the pictures off the walls. They took the wash-stand, and the Holy Mother off of the mantelpiece. The poor man thought he'd gone insane."

The music was different now: brassy and wild as the journey across Ireland began. As it echoed, Justin saw for a moment his favourite picture of James Joyce, in the broad-rimmed hat and the long black coat. He wondered what Mahler had been like.

"Another time those eejits drew a sideboard across the entrance to the Gents, the day of Slip Hennessy's wedding. There wasn't a man in the place knew what to do with himself." Mr Condon threw his head back and laughed, permitting his teeth to move about in his open mouth. When he'd finished, Mrs Condon said:

"Didn't you say the dentist was a Dublin girl?"

"I think she is."

"It's nice she's at Mrs Keane's."

He did not reply. His father said again that you'd have died laughing, and his mother rose from the table. Justin began to gather up the dishes, resolving that tomorrow he would spend the morning in the piano cubicle of the music shop. Afterwards he'd walk out to Herbert Park and lie in the sun, with a new bit of music lingering the way it always did.

ON SUNDAY AFTERNOON he told her about his time in West Waterford and East Cork, about the McGurk brothers and all the other drapers he had visited. He mentioned Garda Foley and Mrs Keane and Miss Murphy. He spoke of Thomasina MacCarthy's party at 21 Dunlow Road but he didn't go into details and he didn't retail what had passed through his mind concerning any of these people. He'd spent four hours yesterday in the piano cubicle, he said, and he'd lain down in Herbert Park.

"It's nice to get the sun", she said, offering him a piece of the banana cake.

"Sure, we don't get enough of it."

She nodded and then, to his astonishment, she spoke of his simplicity. It was that, she said, that the priest and she should have pointed out to him; it was that that was notable.

He sipped his tea, wondering if she was rambling in her elderliness. She never had done so before, she'd always been as sharp as a needle.

"Simplicity?" he said. "Are you feeling yourself?"

"Father Finn liked to come here on a Sunday. He liked it particularly and I liked it myself. With the piano lessons on a Wednesday it was the same."

He frowned, then nodded. He'd watched the tennis-players in Herbert Park, he said, after it had become too chilly to go on lying on the grass. It would be a long time yet, he said, before the symphony was complete; there'd be years in the piano cubicle and years lying out in the sun, letting the music run through his head. It was no good being in a hurry; you knew instinctively the pace that suited you.

"You were like a child to us all those years, Justin."

"Ah sure, it was enjoyable all round."

He reached for another slice of cake. His tea-cup was empty and he wondered why she didn't fill it. He looked at her closely and saw that she had begun to weep, something she had never done in his presence before.

"My father was telling us last night", he said, "about a time some lads let a crate of chickens loose in the Bay Hotel, Dungarvan."

He spoke in desperation: he wanted to stop her talking about Father Finn and about his own simplicity, how he'd been a child to them all those years. Her voice had a peculiar note in it.

"It's gone now", he said, "the old Bay Hotel."

He knew she had no interest in a hotel she'd never seen or heard of before; why should she have? Yet he went on talking about it, about the barricading of the Gents at the time of Slip Hennessy's wedding, and the

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removal of the furniture from Father Dolan's bedroom while he was having his tea. He spoke hurriedly, his words tumbling and juddering. Urgently they rushed from him, preventing her from speaking. But when he paused for breath she said:

"We damaged you between us, Justin. We took advantage of your simplicity."

"Ah no, no."

Again he spoke swiftly, endeavouring to convey through his agitation that he did not want to hear; that once she had spoken, the words could not be undone. For a long time now he had known he could play the piano in a tidy, racy way, that possibly he possessed no greater gift. It was his longing to walk away from his Ford Fiesta, from his parents' house and from Ireland, that made him different from his father, not his modest musical aptitude. And yet his fantasy sprang from a lingering sliver of hope, from words that had once been spoken in his Aunt Roche's sitting-room. He had clutched at the straw they had offered him and it had kept him going. He had played his part, not knowing what it was, offering them a straw also: for the first time, he realised that.

"Father Finn couldn't die guilty", she said. "No more than I can. He asked me to tell you the truth before he went, Justin, and I have to do that. No harm or damage was ever intended."

Justin put down his tea-cup and saucer on a round glass-topped table as familiar to him as any piece of furniture in his parents' house. She was right to have mentioned his simplicity: she might as easily have called him a fool. He felt ashamed of being in the room with her since she knew so much about his foolishness; she might even have guessed that he had seen himself in the broad-rimmed hat and the long black overcoat, or sunning himself on an island with Gauguin's dark-skinned girls.

"I'd have deprived you of the piano and the gramophone if I'd sent you away."

He stared at her. She should have sent him away all the same, she said, she should have sent him off to play with other children; and in time she should have urged him to embark on a friendship with a girl.

He stood up. "That's a nice little piece you composed tor me", Father Finn had said, and he saw again the priest's face as he spoke those words, seeing it differently now. He saw his Aunt Roche's differently also, with anxiety twitching in it as the priest murmured his praise and his encouragement, both of them fearful for the safety of their Wednesday and Sunday afternoons.

"Don't go, Justin. Don't go."

But there was no point in staying, any more than there was a point in saying he would end by marrying Thomasina MacCarthy. His Aunt Roche, who had seemed to understand so much, wouldn't understand that such things happened when you had nothing to keep you going. He had thought the world of her, just as he had of Father Finn, but she wouldn't understand if he said that in time he would acquire his father's bonhomie, even his popularity with the drapers of the provinces. A woman like Miss Murphy might enter his life, or a woman like Mrs Keane.

He did not look again at the frail presence in the room he had come to know so well. She cried out at him, only repeating that she'd had to tell the truth, that the truth was more important than anything. She caught at the sleeve of his jacket, begging him to forgive her for the past. He pushed her hand away, and swore at her before he went.

Texts

Dostoevsky's laundry list,
Iris Murdoch's knickers,
The last card Forster played at whist,
Auden's bedroom slippers,
Milton's hairbrush, Dryden's wig,
Wordsworth's picnic hamper,
Lawrence's suggestive fig,
Larkin's rubber-stamper,
Eliot's bank account (deposit),
Wallace Stevens' ledgers,
Shakespeare's pen (or Bacon's, was it?),
Baudelaire's french letters,
Joyce's eye-patch, Yeats's ties,
Oscar Wilde's carnations,
Yesterday's accessories,
Tomorrow's revelations.

John Mole

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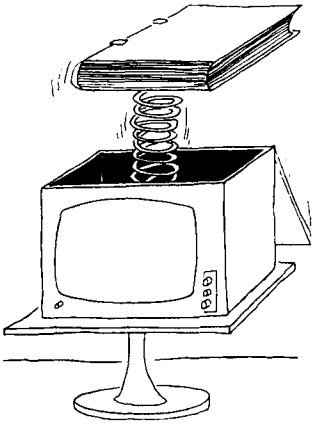
John Wain

The Incidental Thoughts of Marshall McLuhan



MARSHALL AT THE wheel of his car, driving through the busy streets of Toronto with a nervous impatience that expressed itself in rapid changes of pace, now jamming the brakes full on, now trampling on the accelerator so that the car sprang forward like a greyhound that sees the electric hare receding in the distance . . . Marshall coming in out of the night in Brooklyn Heights, masculine and companionable, a cigar fuming at the corner of his mouth and that burly Irish priest in tow . . . Marshall sitting on a bar stool in Washington D.C., burping with indigestion, discussing with one of the local habitués various remedies for "gas on the stomach" . . . and always Marshall talking, talking, pouring out the continuous stream of notions that issued from his ceaselessly active mind like an unstoppable flow of ticker-tape. "Incidentally, John, that was the moment when the Ivory Tower became the Control Tower", "Incidentally, John, the view of the world as global village", "Incidentally, John, it's no accident that after 1850 English prose becomes a p.a. system", "Incidentally, John, some of the new material brought into the focus of poetry by Laforgue and Corbiére was intentionally hilarious." Everything seemed to be thrown off incidentally, as if to one or other side of the main thoroughfare of his thinking, but what it was incidental to I never could tell.

IF YOU ARE A WRITER it is natural, though not inevitable, that some of your friends will be writers; and it is interesting, from time to time, to go mentally through the list and sort them into two categories: those whose work you read because you already knew them, and those whom you got to know because you read their work and found it interesting.

In the years immediately following the end of the Second World War, when American books and periodicals made their appearance again in English bookshops, I was a great reader of the New Criticism. Looking back now, the New Criticism seems to me a rather tame affair, and such controversy as it stirred up little more than a storm in a teacup. But it seemed different in those days, from about 1946 to 1950. For one thing, it flourished almost entirely within the English Departments of Universities, and one has to set it against the rather somnolent and unadventurous atmosphere of English literary studies in the preceding half-century or so.

In the convention as then established on both sides of the Atlantic, what you did with literature was either to "appreciate" it, which in practice meant writing sensitive little essays about it couched in rather consciously cadenced prose, or to do "research" on it, which always meant the unearthing of new information. This information seemed to be valued not because anyone found it particularly interesting but because it had not been unearthed before: it was a "contribution to knowledge", a notion which had evidently been taken over, largely unexamined, from the physical sciences. Against this the New Criticism put forward a predilection for intensive analysis, particularly with a view to enquiring by what means, precisely, the language of poetry obtained its effects. Since this kind of analysis made "modern" poetry seem more interesting and acceptable, it was largely the channel whereby the post-Symbolist poets entered the subject-matter of academic discussion, whereas the preceding generation of scholars had reacted to modern writing mainly by shaking their heads over it.

In view of what was to come later, the victories of the New Criticism hardly seem worth much celebration. The intensive study of contemporary writing in universities can be seen clearly, now that it is established, as not much of a benefit either to the academic world or to the practising writer, and as for the old standards of objectivity and "research", they were at least better than the trendy nonsense that reigns now. Philology was better than linguistics. It may have been gently boring to listen to a scholar discoursing, out of a vast knowledge, about Scandinavian roots and loan-words and dialect forms, but at least the scholar *knew* something and could solve real problems; his views were more worth listening to than glib theorising about linguistics by people who can't order a cup of coffee in any language but their own.

YES, I HAVE TO WORK HARD to think myself back into the state of mind in which the New Criticism seemed exciting and liberating, and when I do so I recall the whole atmosphere of those years, the food shortages and the skimpily produced

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books and the universities full of returned warriors, the older ones anxious to get back to something called "normality" which the younger ones, never having known it, were not certain they would recognise if they saw it; and my own early twenties.

Then it is that I remember the physical feel of those thick, well-funded periodicals, lavishly produced with good printing and wide margins, in which the New Criticism could be read. They were heaped up in tempting piles on the counters of university bookshops, Blackwell's in Oxford, Heffer's in Cambridge and the like. I suppose in publishing terms their sale in England was negligible, amounting to a few score. But they made an impact on the small world in which I had my being, a world in which poetry and criticism were what we mainly talked about. I eyed and fingered them in the shops; when I could (for they were expensive) I bought them; and when I bought a copy I read it to pieces. I can see those magazines now—*The Sewanee Review, The Kenyon Review, The Hudson Review*. They arrived like ambassadors from a world that seemed both inciting and reassuring, a world where people were interested in the same things that we were, but looked at them in a different way.

SINCE THIS ESSAY IS ABOUT Marshall McLuhan, it is obvious what I am going to say next: that in these thick, shiny reviews I first became acquainted with his name. Quite so. And yet "Herbert Marshall McLuhan", as he tended to sign himself, was not quite the ordinary New Critic. He wrote what I used to think of as "brain-teeming" criticism. Where the traditional scholar rarely ventured outside his "field", and the conventional New Critic applied what were becoming well-worn techniques to the text in front of him (the sacred phrase was "the words on the page"), McLuhan worked by sending up a shower of comparisons, analogies, wisecracks, sudden satiric jabs at people and attitudes he disliked, and equally sudden excursions into scholastic philosophy or modern advertising practice (both these last were subjects he had studied attentively), all in the service of illuminating, or preparing for illumination, whatever book or writer he was discussing. It was like riding on a roller-coaster; it also reminded me of Johnson's description of the practice of the Metaphysical poets: "the most heterogeneous ideas are yoked by violence together."

In McLuhan's case the violence had nothing sullen or offensive about it; it was the natural outcrop of a geniality, an impatience with conventional categories, and a willingness to have a go and try anything for size. Most critics make an *aperçu* serve them as theme for a whole essay or even a whole book; McLuhan provided an *aperçu* in virtually every line, and if they were not all equally good, if indeed some of them were unconvincing to the point of absurdity, well, there was always the interest of seeing what the man would say next; and there was a large, gusty breeze of fresh air blowing through the whole enterprise.

I remember feeling more than once that if the title of any of McLuhan's essays were to get lost, no one would be able to say, from reading the essay, what it had actually been *about*. In the 1950s he began to contribute to English periodicals; I believe the first British editor to use him was Cyril Connolly, who included an essay on "American Advertising" in the number of *Horizon*, in 1950, that dealt specifically with the American scene. You could at any rate tell what that one was about; but when Marshall moved to the Oxford periodical *Essays in Criticism* a little later, he contributed an essay on "Tennyson and Picturesque Poetry" (I, iii, 1951) which gave me the impression, on reading it, that if it had been left by an open window without a paperweight and the sheet bearing the title blown away, it would have been no easy task to reconstruct what the essay had formally been *about*. Here is a specimen paragraph:

> "It might be suggested that landscape offered several attractive advantages to the poets of the mid-eighteenth century. It meant for one thing an extension of the Baroque interest in *la peinture de la pensée*, which the study of Seneca had suggested to Montaigne and Bacon and Browne—an interest which reached a maximal development, so far as the technique of direct statement permitted, in Pascal, Racine, and Alexander Pope. Pope especially deserves study from this point of view since he first developed the couplet to do the complex work of the double plot of the Elizabethans. He discovered how to make a couplet achieve a symbolic vision. That is, to effect an instant of inclusive consciousness by the *juxtaposition without copula* of diverse and even paradoxical situations or states of mind:
>
> *The hungry judges soon the sentence sign,*
> *And wretches hang that jurymen may dine.*
>
> The judges are hungry but not for justice; yet there is no suggestion that they would be better judges if they had dined. The stark confrontation of this human condition is enforced by the second line or 'sub-plot' which is parallel but inferior. The suggestion that meat must hang before it is edible, and that jurymen are merely promoting the proper business of society by seeing that it gets hung is analogous to the vision of society in Swift's *Modest Proposal* and to Lear's vision on the heath. The couplet in Pope's hands escaped from the conditions imposed by univocal discourse which had developed in the Cartesian milieu."

Let no one imagine that I am quoting such a paragraph satirically, to show Marshall as a quaint or clownish figure. On the contrary, I admired it then and I admire it now. I like the sweep and audacity, the impression he gives of having so much to say about so many subjects that one thought can scarcely be brought in without three or four others which have a bearing on it, a bearing often hitherto unsuspected. The incidentals are as important as the main line, the digressions as essential as the ratiocinative thread. In that respect Marshall was very like Sterne (who had an Irish mother); and when you add his veneration for James Joyce and the fact that during the war years he had been in close contact with Wyndham Lewis, another adventurous polymath and controversialist, the lineage becomes a little clearer. It

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wasn't straight "New Criticism" by any means; it was McLuhanism.

I FOUND THESE ESSAYS enormously helpful in the development of my own mind, not that it was ever going to resemble his mind — we were very different types, and the friendship that developed between us was at least partly a friendship of opposites. But where the New Criticism slightly bored me, and the tradition of "contributing to knowledge" seemed to be a dead hand, McLuhan's essays galvanised me into a new awareness of the diversity and richness of the field there was to be cultivated. I also liked his watchful, ironic eye on the social scene: no ivory-tower scholar he; his chief claim for literary study, indeed, was that it sharpened one's response to experience and helped one to stand out from what he called the "zombie horde" of urban consumers.

WHEN, IN 1951, HIS FIRST FORAY into social criticism appeared—*The Mechanical Bride*, a study of advertising techniques—I was ready for it. The blend of learning, speculation, satire, and comic-strip presentation seemed to me an idiom that only McLuhan could have developed; and now, 30-odd years later, I am sure I was right. I had a great deal of trouble getting hold of a copy; it was brought out by the Vanguard Press, New York, who did not seem to have a British distributor; and it is a neat instance of the complicated web of relationships that makes up the most ordinary life that the person who ultimately lent me a copy was F. P. Wilson.

That gentle, grave and learned man was Merton Professor of English Literature at Oxford during the brief time I spent in graduate study, and though I was manifestly a square peg in a round hole ("research", as Wilson and his colleagues pursued it, was not my line of country and I think it was a relief to everybody when I got that fact straight and just went away) he treated me with courtesy and kindliness, sharing with me his vast knowledge whenever I was in any kind of position to benefit by it. He had evidently met McLuhan at some point on the academic circuit, and corresponded with him now and then; McLuhan had sent him *The Mechanical Bride*, and he lent it to me. I don't think that book was F. P. Wilson country; by the time I could bear to part with it I had left Oxford, and I sent Wilson's copy back wrapped up very, very carefully, as if it had been a Gutenberg Bible. "Thank you", he wrote, "for sending McLuhan's odd book with such conscientious parcelling."

Perhaps it was Wilson who mentioned to McLuhan that he had an admirer, a rather strange and unsettled young man called Wain who had recently left Oxford to take a lectureship at the University of Reading, 28 miles down the river. Or perhaps someone else did; I mentioned Marshall McLuhan to so many people that sooner or later one of them would be bound to run into him or someone who knew him. At all events, some time in the early 1950s he wrote to me, inviting me to contribute to a magazine called *Explorations* which he and some colleagues were bringing out at the University of Toronto. I wrote a short piece, I can't remember what about; it appeared; our acquaintanceship was launched, for had I not proudly appeared under his editorship, was I not one of his team of Explorers? In 1956 I sent him my first volume of poetry, *A Word Carved on a Sill* (the first, that is, with a commercial publisher; there had been the conventional limited edition of a "slim volume" five years earlier), and he replied with a generously appreciative letter.

THE FIRST TIME WE MET in person was on a wintry night in December 1958, in, of all places, Brooklyn. I was spending some months in America; my curiosity to see more of that country had been aroused by a short and hasty visit the year before, and in the autumn of 1958 I moved my life lock, stock and barrel to America—not on a campus, which would have wedged me back into an environment I had only recently summoned the determination to get out of, but simply moving here and there, keeping alive by writing, finding new places and new people. I had spent a couple of months in the New England countryside, but as winter came down I had come into New York and, with the help of friends, found a small apartment in Montague Terrace, Brooklyn Heights. I stayed there till May or June 1959 and have never been back to the place; it was so pleasant, so quiet, so full of a friendly and unthreatening neighbourhood spirit that I am afraid to see it again in case it has been spoilt, sullied, degraded. I remember it with so much affection, the little shops and businesses and bars, the promenade where one walked and admired the finest of all views of Manhattan, the view that makes you catch your breath and think what a wonderful thing it is, after all, to be a human being. (Actually *being* in Manhattan usually has rather the opposite effect on me.)

Marshall McLuhan and I had been exchanging letters; he was on a visit to New York and he knew where I was; the letters became telephone calls; the date and time were settled and he appeared in person. I can't remember, at this distance of time, why I received him in the apartment rather than meeting him in town somewhere, but at any rate he took the I.R.T. to Borough Hall, came up to street level in the lift, braved the night and weather along the promenade, and knocked on my door. With him was a thick-set Irish-American priest whose name I have forgotten, or perhaps I never learnt it. Marshall made something of a habit of priestly company. As there are some men you rarely see without a woman, and others you rarely see without a dog, so it seemed to me that when Marshall appeared there was usually a priest in the offing, which after all was natural for an Irish Catholic of blameless life and with no love of solitude.

Of course these priests were always of the jolly, man-to-man kind, well able to laugh tolerantly at a slighly *risqué* story or hold their own when the bottle went round. The one he had with him on this first occasion was very much the type. The two of them came in smoking cigars the size of cabbage stalks, and the first impression Marshall made on me was of a kind of all-boys-together jollity. I suppose it was just the dedicated family man and conscientious college teacher

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enjoying a night out on the town with the boys. He was genial, so determinedly so that he seemed at times to be doing it for a bet, and the cigar stuck in the corner of his mouth made him look like a gangster in a B-film. All this I enjoyed. I have never objected to a slight touch of absurdity in people I admire and value; it gives an extra spice to their characters, and sets at a distance the ordinary dullness of life.

The evening passed off agreeably; what we talked about I don't remember, but knowing Marshall I am sure we soon plunged into ideas. When we parted, it was with a promise to meet again soon, and in fact we came together the following spring in Washington, D.C., at something called a Congress of Cultural Leaders. I don't remember exactly what this heavy title covered, but it was the brainchild of Robin Richman, who was, I seem to remember, organising a network of events in which various literary and other notabilities criss-crossed the United States. All I recall at this distance of time is a series of isolated vignettes: a reception at the house of Walter Winchell, a party at which Kathleen Raine and George Barker were present—I remember thinking what a puzzle anyone would be setting himself if he tried to get a unified impression of what English poets were like by somehow conflating the three of us.

I have a hazy memory that we were supposed to be discussing the theme of the "Mass Media"; if so, that would explain Marshall's presence there, because although he was some years away from his flowering of reputation he had begun to be known as a person with interesting views on that kind of topic. I remember his announcing straight off, "The English language is a mass medium", which had the refreshing effect of broadening the discussion immediately.

My memory seems to want to site that particular scene in a certain bar (I have always gravitated towards bars), and indeed I think there must have been one bar I was in the habit of drinking in, because I can see myself very clearly in there with Marshall. He was sitting on one of those circular stools with metal stalks that American bars always have, and he was bringing up a lot of wind. Marshall was a nervous man, not in the sense of being timid (far from it), but in the sense of being highly wrought, possessed by a kind of nervous impatience that made him eat quickly. This same impatience accounted also, no doubt, for the terrifying quality of his driving ("I drive like a bad-tempered cab-driver"), aiming the car at the narrow and irregular gap between two lines of traffic while explaining ("Incidentally, John") some new development in his thinking. It quite clearly explains his tendency to flatulence. Forty-odd years of eating too fast will have their effect; the gods of the gastric juices are not mocked. I can see Marshall now, sitting on the bar stool toying with a glass of beer (and the sudsy stuff they sell you as beer in America would in any case give flatulence to someone who had never had it), stifling a procession of belches, until the man occupying the next stool engaged him in conversation on the subject of how to deal with the problem. Marshall took up the subject with perfect naturalness, taking the man's advice seriously and also advancing rival theories of his own; though he had enormous intellectual pride, in normal relationships he had not an ounce of conceit or affectation in his make-up. Condescension, loftiness, what the English call "being stuck-up", was entirely absent in him. He would, if occasion served, have started a philosophical discussion with a gangster from a B-film.

THERE WAS A LOT GOING ON in my personal life at the time, and the subject of our debates and discussions claimed some, but not all, of my attention. The vignettes, however, have stayed. Whose beautiful lawn was I slowly walking across when I came upon the lean, ascetic figure of Father Martin d'Arcy, sitting in a cane chair? Where was the graveyard in which I spent a fascinating hour with Robert Lowell, reading off names and dates and breathing in the ancestral smell of that green and flowering place associated with death, rebirth, renewal, continuity, history?

I met and talked with Lowell quite often during the week or so that our deliberations lasted; became aware of the depth of his knowledge of European history and literature, and how much his view of life, and of death, was nourished by the past. I also remember Lowell's firmness. He had a very clear idea of which people he had time for and which he didn't. I once met him when I was in the company of a perfectly pleasant man who worked on the editorial staff of a literary magazine; we were having a drink together, Lowell happened along, and when Lowell and I agreed to meet later (I don't remember the details) I suggested that the other man should come along too; I have always been easy-going about such things, no doubt too much so, and certainly to my cost. Lowell trod on the suggestion very firmly. He wasn't rude, but he left neither of us in doubt that the idea didn't appeal to him. The other man quietly bowed out.

BY THE TIME I RETURNED to England in the early summer of 1959, I had behind me several layers of experience of Marshall: the early years of fascinated reading of his essays, our exchanges of letters, and the man himself in his cigar-smoking hail-fellow-well-met mood, in his quieter, more confidential mood, and finally in his role as a public debater, not yet widely known and yet already a Cultural Leader. To these layers the next few years added another of more importance, perhaps, than any of them. I got to know him as a family man, at a time when I had begun to be a family man myself.

Not long after getting back to England—on 1 January 1960, in fact—I got married, and the next time I had contact with Marshall was during the summer of 1962, by which time my wife Eirian had brought forth our first son, William, and was pregnant with Ianto, our second. We were in Canada, and in Ontario, because I had signed on to teach a Summer School on Shakespeare at McMaster University. McMaster, as Canadian readers will not need to be told but others might, is situated beside Lake Ontario in the steel-manufacturing city of Hamilton. I remember that summer as a strange, rather hallucinatory time, not at all unhappy or unrewarding but curiously unreal and dream-like. The stifling heat pressed down, one moved about in a slow, drugged fashion, and the impressions of unfamiliar streets, houses and gardens mixed

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with the thoughts of basic and familiar stories, ideas and characters—for, during many hours of each day, the talk was mainly of Shakespeare—in a thick, sluggish tide that nevertheless pullultated with rich imaginative life.

Hamilton is not very far from Toronto, and Marshall drove out one evening, early in our stay, to bring his wife Corinne to meet us and have dinner. I shall say nothing about Corinne except that of all the women I have ever met she struck me as the one most deserving of the epithet "gracious." Courtesy and good breeding shone from everything she said or did. The dinner in our rented house was a success, and the return invitation soon followed. We took the bus into Toronto, carrying the eighteen-month-old William and his impedimenta, and Marshall drove down to the bus station to meet us.

Another vignette of Marshall: standing on the concrete floor of the Toronto bus station, a long, lean figure, his curly hair thinning above a lofty, furrowed brow and attentive eyes, swivelling his head as if trying to look in all directions at once. He had not yet seen us as we walked towards him, and his expression was an interesting blend of watchfulness, irritation (crowds and jostling always irritated him), and a certain detached thoughtfulness as if he were analysing the scene before him as part of some vast, never-ending piece of research on the anthropology of modern urban man.

Marshall and Corinne lived in a pleasant house in a suburban street well shaded by trees, in fact Marshall told me with some pride that the area within which the house stood was officially designated an oak forest. During that hot, oppressive summer we enjoyed their uncomplicated, generous hospitality many a time, and spent hours reclining in the cool of the garden. Classes at McMaster ended by lunch-time on Saturday until Monday morning, and we several times came in, all three of us, to Toronto, where the McLuhan house was thrown open to us as a second home. North American houses are as a rule bigger and more spacious than those of Europe, and though their house was no bigger than would be usual among the Canadian middle classes, it seemed big to us, with its liberal allowance of bedrooms and bathrooms.

The McLuhans' numerous offspring had not all taken wing then; Eric, the eldest son, had gone, but some or all of the girls were at home and so was the youngest boy, Michael. I never sorted the girls out, though Eirian had their names and their different personalities tagged within an hour or two; to me, they were just a tide of beautiful youth and femininity, flowing round us all the time. Two of them, who shared a bedroom next door to ours, even managed to be polite and friendly to us when reporting that William had gone into their room and relieved himself on the carpet. To me they were all just embodiments of splendid girlhood, and there was no need to tell them apart, though in later years I got to know Teri, the cleverest one, on an entirely different basis, that of friendship among grown people.

So, in that garden in the oak forest, another vignette of Marshall: in a short-sleeved shirt, can of beer in hand, sitting in a deck-chair and talking. "Incidentally, John, nationalism is entirely a product of the printing press—it fostered linear thinking and formally drawn linguistic frontiers." "You can always predict the next development in a civilisation—the trick is to read the signals—just read 'em off." Distinguished friends came and went; Northrop Frye seemed to be a frequent visitor, and was it at Marshall's that I met Robertson Davies?

THE MCLUHANS WERE, in their familial aspect, a somewhat old-fashioned couple, by which I mean that their relationship with their children was along traditional lines. Corinne was very much the patient, attentive, full-time mother; Marshall the head of the family, authoritarian and slightly remote. He undoubtedly loved his children, but he didn't fuss over them. Not that his authoritarianism amounted to much in practice. It rather reminded me of that sentence of S. J. Perelman's: "He had the air of a man accustomed to giving orders and having them disobeyed." In some respects he approached the comic-strip stock figure of the harassed father of a houseful of teenage girls. "There's no point in trying to telephone our house", he once said. "It's much simpler to telegraph." "Have you heard about the new after-shave that drives teenage girls mad?" he asked me on another occasion, "It smells like a telephone."

Altogether, Marshall was not very much attuned to children. He was a kindly man, but his thoughts and preoccupations were elsewhere. Like all people of his kind, he tended, in the presence of children, either to ignore them altogether or to give them fitful bursts of attention that were slightly overdone. William, only just out of babyhood, was naturally enough outside Marshall's range of cognisance altogether, except in one narrow area. The McLuhans had on the wall of their dining-room an Indian ceremonial mask (at least I think it was Indian; it may have been African or Eskimo). William, on first noticing this, pointed to it and said, "Man." This pleased Marshall, perhaps because it fitted in with some anthropological or perceptual theory he was developing (he always did like things to fit in). After that, whenever we all headed for the dining-room, he would bend down to William and say in a tone of mounting excitement, "We're going to see man, William—*man*!" William's usual response was to smile tolerantly.

These week-ends at the McLuhan home have left me, then, with a rich store of memories of the man in his relaxed, unstructured moments. And of his habits. One of these was to sit at the kitchen table and pummel the back of his neck with an electrically-driven implement which resembled . . . well, now, what did it resemble? It had the kind of curly cable you see on a barber's electric clippers, but its handle was more like that of a hair-dryer, and the business end consisted of what looked like two small boxing-gloves which thudded rapidly and alternately against anything to which they were applied. Marshall used to apply it to the top of his spinal column, on the grounds that this stimulated the trapezium muscle and also the cerebral cortex. All the time the contraption was belabouring him he went on expounding his ideas as usual, making no concession to the self-administered therapy beyond raising his voice slightly to compensate for the noise, and slip in a few asides like, "Incidentally, John, this blooming trapezium muscle. . . ."

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OTHER THINGS EMERGED in their turn. Once, on a visit to his office at St Michael's College, I noted with interest that one wall was dominated by a huge oar, which turned out to be the one he had pulled in his College boat at Cambridge. To portage such an object across the Atlantic one would need to regard it as of some value; to put it on display in one's study indicates that one is prepared to convey that sense of its value to others.

Marshall was in fact something of an Anglophile. His time at Cambridge had evidently left him with good memories of the place. As well as its intellectual discourse he spoke with pleasure of its bodily recreations. Who would have thought that Marshall had been in his day a College hearty, a keen rowing man? But, as we sat in the shade of the oak forest with our cans of beer, he recalled epic adventures on the river, feats of prowess and hardihood; a race against some other College in which conditions had been so severe, in wind and lashing rain, that both boats had sunk. I had a vision of the tall, thin Marshall being the last to go down, his head, giraffe-like, staying above the surface as the boat subsided to the river-bed.

So he talked on, and I was glad enough to lean back and listen. I can't think that he got any stimulus from my company, but at least I was a willing pair of ears. Marshall's reputation in the academic world was, at that time, very much that of a wild man, sometimes amusing and provocative but not to be taken seriously ("McLuhan's odd book"). He did not, I believe, hold a very important post; the University of Toronto was a staid institution, and the English Department tended to follow a tradition of severe scholarship handed down by such figures as A. S. P. Woodhouse.

To some of these people, Marshall appeared little better than a gifted clown. They were, of course, wrong, and yet there was an atmosphere of outrageous humour, a willingness to push the argument as far as it will go, an abruptness of juxtaposition, that gave his work a (to me) highly refreshing quality of unexpectedness or effervescence. But unexpectedness and effervescence are not qualities prized by severe scholars. They have other goals in view, goals of solid knowledge and carefully buttressed conclusions.

Speaking for myself, I prized the Jack-in-the-box quality of Marshall's mind and personality. Yet, at the same time, it increased my respect for him to find out, during these long summer hours of talk, that his basis in scholarship was thoroughly firm. He had studied philosophy at the University of Manitoba and gone on to take the Tripos at Cambridge. In those days one could not get through these courses in the glib, know-nothing fashion that is common nowadays, when (for instance) the University of Oxford turns out graduates in "English literature" who have never read Milton. Marshall had then stayed at Cambridge and successfuly submitted a Ph.D., his title, I believe, being "The Arrest of Tudor Prose." I never read this thesis but C. S. Lewis (who had, because he had read everything) told me that it was a thesis to prove that all the best prose was written by Catholics and that the art withered at the Reformation. And this, too, would be typical of Marshall, who took his Catholicism seriously and espoused its cause at all times, often leaping out at its adversaries from a totally unexpected position.

ANOTHER MEMORY. A former student of Marshall's owned a sailing-boat of some sort, and offered to take a party of us on the lake one afternoon. A mixed bag of McLuhans and Wains assembled on the jetty, got aboard and flapped off before the breeze. Marshall and I were on deck, on either side of the cabin which projected above deck-level. There was a bench on each side, so the logical thing to do was to stretch out at our ease, looking up at the sky, within sound of each other's voices, which as usual meant that Marshall monologued and I very willingly listened. There was a fair swell on the water that day, and I recall lying with nothing in my field of vision except the mast, the heat-hazed sky, and occasional glimpses of the lake as we pitched to one side or the other, with Marshall's voice coming from the other side of the cabin, endlessly developing his ideas.

I think indeed that I had struck him at a moment of immense fecundity, when a mass of apparently random ideas had begun to form into a whole in his mind. He must have been putting the finishing touches to *The Gutenberg Galaxy* and getting ready for the more speculative flights of social criticism that were to take him to the peak of his reputation with *Understanding Media*. Perhaps, by listening so attentively through so many hours—and it was certainly no trouble—I played a small part in helping to ready him for his most spectacular burst of ideation.

I FOUND MARSHALL intellectually persuasive at this period more than later. Indeed, I look back on the years from 1962 to about 1965 as those in which some traces of influence from his ideas filtered into my own. They are slight, shallow traces and no one would notice them who wasn't specifically looking for them; but I believe they are there in things that I wrote at that time, though I don't recommend anyone to take the trouble to investigate so trivial a matter. But I do remember, for instance, being attracted to his notion of a new oral culture which might do more for poetry than the culture of print had done, bringing the poet back into something like the role of the troubadour and slowing down the reading of poetry to the pace of the speaking voice. Not long after I got home, I was asked to speak to the Oxford University Poetry Society and I chose the topic "The Poet in the Electronic Age"—spreading some of Marshall's message, as refracted through my tastes and preoccupations, to a new soil.

The whirligig of time . . . I remember that the University Poetry Society was run in that year by Ian Hamilton, who went on to edit *The Review* and become an influential figure in the London poetry establishment. I don't imagine Mr Hamilton, as he is today, would sit still and listen to me talking for an hour; nor that I, as I am today, would speak on the Poet and the Electronic Age. *O tempora! O mores!*

Another feature of the years immediately following that Ontario summer was that I made a determined effort to get Marshall launched with a London publisher. He gave me, in Canada, a file of photocopies of various essays and reviews, enough to give a publisher an idea of what kind of book he would provide, and with this file I trod the stairs of many a

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publishing house. But nobody wanted to know.

All in all, I seem to have been regarded, during those years, as the official vendor of McLuhan in England. In 1965 Jonathan Miller, already showing that restless brilliance which has characterised his career, had picked up the message that Marshall had interesting ideas and suggested to me that I should interview him on television in some series he was in charge of. Marshall was just then on a visit to England, by himself this time, and was in fact staying with us in Oxford. It took me no time at all to decide that I was totally unfit for such an enterprise, and Miller, wisely, got Frank Kermode to do it, thus confronting Marshall with an intellect as well-stocked as his own and with as keen an appetite for speculation.

In my capacity as Marshall's bear-leader, I was present at that interview, which was filmed on a sweltering afternoon in a riverside studio in some place like Hammersmith. I listened, watching through the glass panel, with interest and admiration but only occasional flashes of comprehension. The discussion operated on a plane so far above vulgar common sense that there were moments when I felt as if I were in a theatre, watching one of those scenes in Thomas Middleton's *The Changeling* (printed 1653) which take place in a lunatic asylum. The interview never went out.

MARSHALL'S VISIT TO OXFORD, in that year of 1965, provided me with another batch of memories. Some of them will seem trivial, but all are precious to me, as recalling the flavour of the man. I had, by that time, signalled my solidarity with the "electronic era" by going so far as to acquire a tape-recorder, and we spent some time making a tape of our favourite poems. Marshall reading Hopkins in an extraordinary stop-and-start manner which he claimed was dictated by the poet's own diacritical marks. (I wonder where that tape is now?)

Eirian is an excellent cook, and we thought we were feeding Marshall adequately, but it must have been that his accustomed level of protein was not being maintained, for one day he came back from the market with a couple of pounds of steak, which he suggested we should have for breakfast next morning. We dutifully grilled it, and that is the only time in my life when I have had steak for breakfast, another experience I owe to Marshall.

That Oxford visit of 1965 is also useful to look back on because it helps to date Marshall's spectacular rise to fame. That came with *Understanding Media* in 1966. *The Gutenberg Galaxy* had been a talked-about book, but it was still the book of a literary historian. Marshall had not yet become taken up as a propounder of solutions to social questions. Once he was taken up, he became—for a time—a world celebrity, a sought-after oracle, besieged by publishers and TV networks, and inevitably he tended to disappear from ordinary life. We were still friends, but my life was never again as close to his as it was during those first seven years.

Already, by the time of my second Canadian visit in 1969, I felt myself beginning to lose interest in Marshall's ideas because they seemed to me to be hardening into a framework, predictable and inflexible. During his first phase, he had been marvellously attentive to the life around him and to what he found in books from the past, marvellously fertile of suggestion and analogy. During his second, which by 1969 had set in, he seemed to me to be doing little else than read books, and observe phenomena, and see where they fitted in.

ONE OF THE REASONS why Marshall's vogue blazed so furiously and then went out so abruptly was that its fuel was essentially topical. The earlier part of the 1960s was a time when a great many people had become worried about what the new methods of communication were doing to them. The coming of instantaneous communications, the shift from newspaper to radio and thence to television as the staple means of informing the ordinary person about world events, the consequences for trade of the decentralisation brought about by electronic dissemination of data—all these changes bred uneasiness. And in the world of education it was being noticed, apprehensively, that the youngest generation of adults, the students who were arriving at the universities, were now a generation that had grown up in front of the television screen, had largely by-passed the book, and were now confronted with a syllabus and a set of learning conventions based on the printed page.

Marshall, like a cricketer taking an unexpected and glorious catch, was in the right place at the right time. Throughout his career as a literary critic he had consistently shown an interest in the affective side of literature, the ways in which it is perceived by, and works on, the mind. He had proceeded with an eye both to the writer and to the reader. In channelling his interests in this direction, the influence of Cambridge had been crucial. If, after graduating from the University of Manitoba, he had gone on to Oxford rather than to Cambridge, the whole course of his work would, I am convinced, have been different.

In the Oxford English faculty in the years in which Marshall would have been a student, the three most acute intelligences were those of C. S. Lewis, David Cecil, and Nevill Coghill. Lewis, the medievalist, saw himself as the interpreter of a vanished world, expounding a centrally Christian tradition to the barbarian ears of modernity. David Cecil was the scholar and teacher as *belle-lettriste*, a skilful biographer, a graceful essayist, teaching good style and historical imagination by example rather than theoretical precept. Coghill, with his Irish instinct for the theatre, delved into questions of Shakespeare's stagecraft which were opaque to the conventional academic. Each of them treated the reader, or the audience, as essentially material to be worked on: to be coaxed, to be instructed, to be guided into a position where the richness of great literature was more easily visible to them. Their approach was, in the best possible sense, didactic.

The Cambridge tradition was analytic. The field of literary studies was very much dominated by I. A. Richards; the middle and late 1930s, when Marshall, already aiming at Cambridge, would have been intensely receptive to what was emanating from there, were the years of Richards's great vogue. And Richards was a psychologist who had turned his

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attention to literature because he was interested in the cognitive processes involved in reading. Where the Oxford critics worked to set authors in their historical period and to correct errors caused by the distortion of time, Richards was primarily interested in the psychology of the reader, and this concern spilt over into the work of his most brilliant pupil, William Empson, and also to some extent that of F. R. Leavis, who was in the main an opponent; though Leavis complicated matters by regarding literature primarily as character-building. This was the Cambridge that produced such studies of the mind as F. C. Bartlett's *Remembering* (1932), a *milieu* which whole-heartedly took up the study of the perceiving intelligence and the effect on that intelligence of how, as well as what, it perceived. The future author of *Understanding Media* could have found no better training-ground.

This early preoccupation with how the receiving mind grasps and constructs bore fruit in his work from the start: in his *aperçu*, for instance, that modern poetry of the symbolist wing was developed in the wake of the newspaper press. A newspaper page, said Marshall, with its scores of unrelated items placed side by side, was a do-it-yourself kit for perceiving the world; you read the discrete items and built up your own picture of the kind of world you were living in. And, with that tendency to give the boat one further push after it was well launched, he added that this kind of poetry was born in France, and that the biggest single influence on 19th-century French poetry was the theoretical writing of Edgar Poe, a newspaper man.

Or, again, there was his argument, in *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, that the printing press had ministered to nationalism by making it imperative to regulate spelling, which in turn meant that the differences between languages became more formalised and clear-cut. French, say, was spoken and written in its fully developed form until one reached a certain frontier, when one switched immediately to Spanish or Italian, also in their fully developed form; whereas, in the old manuscript days when spelling was a go-as-you-please affair, there would be an area of fifty miles on either side of the frontier in which the accepted language was a compromise between the two, with elements of grammar and vocabulary from both.

Willing as he was to explain virtually all the phenomena of a society with reference to how that society moved information, Marshall was ready for television and the electronic media generally. Indeed, there is a sense in which it is quite true that he was ready for them before anyone else was. The result was the perfect blend of the man and the moment.

All in all, I would say that the period in which I was closest to Marshall McLuhan was the decade from 1956 to '66. Our friendship began, that is, a couple of years before that night when we met for the first time in Brooklyn Heights. It began, as I have related, by correspondence. On an earlier page I mentioned that when I sent him *A Word Carved on a Sill*, he replied with a generously appreciative letter. Perhaps it will clarify what I am trying to say if I put that letter on the page. Here it is in its entirety.

> *Dear Wain,*
>
> Your book of poems begins to implement and express your stellar name. And I am exceedingly pleased to have so early a view of the book, to say nothing of your generous words to me on the fly-leaf.
>
> The poems seem to me quite delightful. I like your tough elegance and intensity achieved by such seemingly simple means. You make *terza rima* seem like the most natural means of discourse. Your voice never falters.
>
> I've seen no reviews but shall be very disappointed if there is not a good deal of enthusiasm for your wit and fun. Your electronic brain poem is one I would admire to hear you read. In fact I wish you could get out an L.P. disc of these poems. The sooner professors of literature become disc-jockeys the better!
>
> Would it be possible for you to write a longish poem on The English Revolution of the past 15 years? It seems to me from here that the scope of the changes involved makes the Russian show puny. You could handle the Dryden couplet I think, very well.
>
> I am about to take off for a few lectures and especially wanted to get this away to you before I left.
>
> Cordial good wishes,
> *Marshall McLuhan*

It will be seen that the man who writes that letter is, to his finger-tips, a literary critic. He reads and judges the poems as poems, commenting on their form and texture; he assesses the kind of gift that he takes the writer to have, and suggests an area of subject-matter within which he might profitably work. The interest in oral presentation, the looking forward to the day when "professors of literature become disc-jockeys", is of course indicative of what is to come. But, at that point, our relationship was along traditional literary lines. I, as a poet, sent my work to him, as a critic, and as a critic he replied.

Six years later, during the summer of our endless lounging conversations, Marshall was still uttering thoughts which I could regard as brain-teeming literary criticism. *The Gutenberg Galaxy* made its first impact, I am sure, on literary people. This is neatly indicated by the fact that, during the summer of 1962 when it was being got ready, the publisher who was to bring it out asked me for what the trade calls a "quote" to put on the jacket. I have lost my copy of the book (I lose everything), but I do remember that I came up with a sentence that began, "This is one of the great panoptic books of our time." I was rather proud of that "panoptic." It seemed to me to indicate the quality in Marshall that had originally attracted me, his wide-ranging alertness, his readiness to draw illustration and analogy from the most diverse areas, his "yoking by violence." The sentence duly appeared on the book's cover.

A few months after that 1965 visit, the balloon went up. *Understanding Media* was suddenly installed overnight as the essential survival kit for anyone wishing to cope with our civilisation, either to make money in it or just to live with it.

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For twelve months or more, that craggily speculative book enjoyed sales that went through the top of the best-seller charts, sales that Grace Metalious did not have then, that Jeffrey Archer does not have now. Phrases like "*The medium is the message*" and "*The global village*" passed from lip to lip, carrying Marshall's name to the furthest shores of the world. It used to give me a feeling of surprised amusement, or perhaps amused surprise, to think that only a couple of years previously Marshall's publisher had seriously thought a quote from an unambitious recluse like me would help his book to gain attention.

As for the London publishers round whose offices I had trudged, back in 1962 and '63, trying to get them to become the English marketers of Marshall McLuhan, it must have crossed their minds occasionally that if they had taken the advice I was offering them for nothing, they would by now have been making a lot of money. But, though they are mostly people I see fairly often, none of them has ever come up to me and admitted that I was right after all.

I say that, of course, in the knowledge that in such matters no one is finally "right." Literary and historical judgments are not susceptible of proof. But publishers bring out books in the hope of making money out of them, and from that point of view they would have been right to listen to me. And yet to give them a chance to make money was not, of course, my motive. That Marshall should become a best-seller was as heavily veiled in the future from me as it was from him and everyone else. The oil-gusher took us all by surprise. My motive in trying to get a hearing for him was simply that I had found interest and stimulus in his work and thought others might too. I thought then, as I think now, that the McLuhan of the first phase, the brain-teeming literary critic, was individual and interesting and would be found so by more people than at that time knew his work.

IT WAS TO BE FOUR YEARS before I saw him again, years in which a great many things happened to him in quick succession (and even some to me). The first in the succession was, as I have indicated, that he became famous and, for that matter, rich. I can date his rise to celebrity fairly exactly from a letter he wrote me on 26 March 1966 in which he speaks of the stampede to interview him and write about him as a new phenomenon which he was still getting used to. I had been told that Tom Wolfe (then a new phenomenon himself) had written an article about Marshall, and I must have had the curiosity to ask him if this were so. His letter says:

> "You ask of Tom Wolfe. He is a Virginian. A Ph.D. in English from Yale. Saw him a good deal in San Francisco last summer. Shall send you his piece on me. We have been in *Life* at length—the whole family. Also in *Fortune*, *Newsweek*, *Time*, *Vogue* and the rest. Suddenly I'm a bestseller pet of the College crowd. Must get out some more while their mood lasts."

That last sentence indicates his attitude during the first wave of his world celebrity. The cat had suddenly jumped his way; the cat was an unpredictable animal and might at any moment jump away again. He proceeded, with gusto, to "get out some more." The next few years saw a torrent of publications, some of them collaborations with his friend Harley Parker, at that time Curator of the Royal Ontario Museum. Among the themes the pair tackled was *Through the Vanishing Point*, a study of the aesthetic and philosophical implications of perspective. Shades of "*Tennyson and Picturesque Poetry*."

That same letter of March 1966 contains the wry observation, "You can imagine some of the local yokel heartburn and nausea at the calamity of my 'fame'. Wish you were here to enjoy the show."

That sentence dismissing his colleagues as merely envious peasants undoubtedly links up with a streak of combativeness in Marshall. Though a kindly and well-intentioned man, he was not conspicuous for dove-like patience. (If it comes to that, anyone who has studied doves knows that they fight among themselves with great savagery.) He did not easily brook contradiction or scepticism. When, in any intellectual forum, he put forward his opinion, the implication was "This is so"; not, as would characteristically have been the case in Oxford, "It seems to me that this is probably so, don't you agree?" Marshall was not much of a one for asking people whether they agreed. He stated his view, and if they didn't agree, that was because they were either being perverse and refusing to see his point because of some vested interest of their own, or because they were inadequate.

I don't believe this attitude grew on him in later years. I think it was probably inherent in him. I daresay that as a teacher he was quite autocratic with his students; or perhaps he was as a teacher very much as he was as a parent, adopting an autocratic stance which no one took much notice of. But inevitably his dislike of contradiction, whether or not it increased in his later years, became in those years increasingly evident, as his ideas attracted more and more attention and he had more and more frequently to expose them in debate. I first noticed this tendency in him during that 1965 Oxford visit. In a city where intellectual disputation is such an industry, it was inevitable that Marshall should get into arguments. And when he got into an argument his only way of proceeding was to sweep aside his opponent unceremoniously. Walking along St Giles's Street one day, we ran into Christopher Ricks. I introduced them, and we all turned in to the *Eagle and Child* for a drink and to sit down. Ricks, whose alert eye had gathered in some of Marshall's doctrines, put forward a few objections and qualifications. He did so good-humouredly; but Marshall's answers were much more brusque. "I don't think I agree with you about simultaneity being the effect of the two-dimensional and homogeneity being the effect of the three-dimensional." Or whatever it was. "That's because you've never considered these matters", replied Marshall off-handedly. Period. He was not going to say anything else. Another point from Ricks, and another very similar answer. We drank up our beer and left.

Ricks did not seem to take offence at all, but I remember thinking that it struck me as a strange kind of tavern conversation between two scholars. But to Marshall, already, opposition was effrontery. And this attitude is not,

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fundamentally, at variance with the deprecating shrug of "Suddenly I'm the bestseller pet of the College crowd." That the crowd should be impressed by his work was not surprising in itself. Nor would it be surprising when they turned their back on him. His valuation of himself was not dependent on popular acclaim. Nor did it depend on the acquiesence of fellow-scholars. Marshall was a law unto himself, and it was that law that he would not have criticised or doubted.

But Marshall's fame went beyond appearing as a calamity to the local yokels. It attracted money, and money changes lives; and lives, in any case, change with time and the twists and turns of personal history. Marshall and Corinne moved to a large, stately house in a selective enclave of Toronto called Wychwood Park. The family grew up and departed. I visited Toronto, with a week or ten days to spare, in the autumn of 1969. Marshall and Corinne showed the same kindness and hospitality, but in other ways changes had set in. The new house was—well, the word that springs to mind is "baronial." It had large rooms, high ceilings, and was full of dark wood. Am I dreaming it, or was there a suit of armour in a corner of one of those large rooms, like a solemn, Tennysonian version of "Man"? Certainly it was a house in which one could easily imagine a suit of armour.

I did not actually stay in this edifice. Marshall and Corinne had a smaller house, close by, which they evidently used as a lodge for hospitality. I shared it with Marshall's younger brother, Red. (I have no idea what his baptismal name was; he was always just called Red.) A clergyman, gentle and retiring in character, he had, I conjectured, always been somewhat overshadowed by his older and more conspicuous brother. Certainly I formed the impression that, in their younger days, Marshall had rehearsed his role as family autocrat on his junior brother. He himself had set off to England soon after graduating in 1934; and when, not long afterwards, Red was preparing for that European Odyssey which is essential for all young North Americans, Marshall had cautioned him sternly not to let the side down and to remember that he was an ambassador for his country. Above all he had told him, in a phrase that stuck in Red's mind, "not to turn the place into a hobo jungle."

Marshall's attitude towards hobo jungles was always unbending. He was totally free of any tendency to sentimentalise the vagabond. To him, the drop-out was merely one of the standard products of bourgeois society, as predictable as the commuter with his suburban home and bank loan. "The Beatnik", he remarked to me in the 1950s, "is simply the Elizabethan Malcontent." In other words, those of us who were literate had seen it all before. This remained his attitude to the various phases of hoboism that characterised his later lifetime—from the Beats to the Hippies and thence to the drug culture of the 1960s; all of which, in their turn, produced some reverberations within his family circle.

Much was the same as before—the long conversations in which I mainly listened, the priests of whom there always seemed to be at least one at dinner, and even something of the informality and relaxation. Marshall had bought a tandem, on which he swooped round the leafy avenues of Wychwood Park; and there exists somewhere a photograph of the two of us riding this machine. (Why didn't he get an ordinary bicycle? Was it because he might suddenly have a Thought, as he pedalled along, that he wished to communicate immediately to some faithful Boswell or Sancho Panza sitting behind?) But the old easy-going atmosphere was dead, the swirl of family life, the jokes, the neighbourhood coming and going. Marshall was a great man now, and Wychwood Park was occupied by rich people and guarded by security men. Years before, I had used as the epigraph to an early novel, *The Contenders*, a remark by Anthony Trollope: "Success is the necessary misfortune of human life, but it is only to the very unfortunate that it comes early." I suppose I must have seen the truth of that sentence when, at the age of thirty-one, I sent that novel to the press; but now, at forty-four, I was seeing it enacted before my eyes. It was no longer possible to imagine Marshall sitting on a bar stool and discussing remedies for flatulence with just any Joe who happened to occupy the next stool along.

Because I was without the family and not tied in to any particular routine, my time was more disposable on this visit, and Marshall involved me to some extent with his students. But of course the students, too, were different now. They were, I think, all graduates. The University (whether or not as the result of "heartburn and nausea") had removed him from undergraduate teaching and put him in charge of something called the Centre for Culture and Technology, a wide-ranging title if ever there was one. The University of Toronto is a highly traditional body, and I was pleased to note that a flavour of tradition persisted even in the new headquarters wherein Marshall served his strong intellectual punch. It consisted of an early Victorian coach-house, standing in the middle of a yard, dwarfed by the large academic buildings round it. There was something cosy, homelike, makeshift about it. As for what he was trying to *do* there, I take my clue from a letter he wrote me on 11 March 1966:

> "Don't miss Ed T. Hill's latest book *The Hidden Dimension* (Doubleday). Big new trend now develops in U.S.A. namely concern with the *effects* of technology, e.g. excitement about the safety-car. It moves on many levels. Most un-American. Most to my advantage."

Those are, of course, just a few sentences from that letter. It starts with a string of jokes he has heard recently and ends, "Our love to all of yiz whatever, *Marshall*."

Now it was no longer a question of letters and conversations and the rising torrent of publications. Marshall had a Centre, and a Centre meant seminars and enrolled students and a place in the academic scheme of life. I went to some of the seminars, though I cannot honestly say I got much out of them. Perhaps I would have found them more exciting if I had not had, seven years earlier, those long afternoons of talk, talk, talk, the cans of beer and deck-chairs amid the oak forest. God be with those days. The Marshall I saw now was institutionalised. He had suffered

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the "necessary misfortune" of success. Earnest students now came to him as to an oracle, whereas in 1962 he had been the local wild man, apt at any moment to throw off some startling *aperçu*. The earlier role had fitted him better. But as I write that sentence I know that I, too, am less interesting and adaptable than I was in 1962. We all share the same fate, we all cool and harden and become less plastic, and

Custom lies upon us with a weight
Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life!

As for Marshall's method in these seminars, it was basically a formalisation of the old aphoristic deck-chair monologues. He always proceeded, mainly, by throwing off stimuli; and now each student was presented with a typewritten wodge of thoughts, epigrams, the names and details of books that had influenced Marshall's thinking, all adding up to a do-it-yourself kit for anyone wishing to become a disciple and share the McLuhan insights. The students seemed uncertain what to do with these slabs of typescript. I was uncertain myself. But it was good to see Marshall working, spreading his ideas, receiving even that uncertain homage.

IT WAS NOT TO LAST. Already he was on a knife-edge. I returned to England at the end of 1969, and a little later came the news of Marshall's brain tumour and the severe operation that was needed to remove it. He told me how many hours he had been stretched out on the table, something horrific—twenty, I believe. I remember wondering, no doubt foolishly, whether all that electric pounding on the back of the neck had been good for him; and, no doubt even more foolishly, whether his wildly accelerated mental processes, his restless torrent of analogy and speculation ("the game keeps springing up like crazy", he wrote once), was not connected somehow with an excessive supply of blood to the brain. I expect these thoughts were as idle and irrelevant as most amateur speculation in the field of neuro-cerebral medicine.

A year or so after his operation, Marshall came to London with Corinne. Their family had dispersed by that time and several of them were on our side of the Atlantic; Teri, if I am not mistaken, was in Paris. It was August, the dead middle of the summer, the featureless dog-days when the intoxication of summer greenness is over and the crisp touch of autumn has not yet arrived. I had escaped from the steamy lethargy of Oxford to the Welsh hills on a family holiday, but to see Marshall and Corinne I took the long train ride south-east, down through the sweltering counties and the baking towns, past the miles of dandelions and ragwort and deep pink willow-herb that lined the stony bedding of the railway lines, and rolled into sweating, stranded London.

We had dinner, with two or three friends, at, of all places, the Reform Club. The meal-time was not an unmixed pleasure. The game of musical chairs that had begun in 1965 had taken another turn: then, Jonathan Miller had asked me to interview Marshall on television and I had managed to push the job on to Frank Kermode. In 1967 Kermode invited me to write a short book on McLuhan for the series "Fontana Modern Masters", which he was editing; again I managed to side-step and the book was written by Jonathan Miller. I thought then and think now that Miller did an excellent job in his brief, lucid study, sympathetic and interested but at the same time trying to get Marshall's ideas into a wider perspective, which inevitably meant questioning some of them and scaling others down.

I had given Miller's book a reasonably approving review in *The Observer*, and it was this fact that slightly marred our dinner-party. To Marshall, of course, Miller was simply one of those who had deviated from the plain way of discipleship and assent. Every caveat, every sentence carrying the implication that Marshall could be less than an infallible oracle, was simply a mark of inadequacy, or envious rivalry, or, at best, of "never having considered these matters." And the worst of it was that I had reviewed Miller's book, not only without condemning it, not only without sweeping it aside as a tissue of worthless rubbish, but actually with approval. I had recommended people to read it, though of course it was obvious (to Marshall) that such an expedient would lead them deeply into error. I, the "great panoptic" panegyrist of *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, the original foundation member of the fan club. . . . There was a hint of the *Et tu, Brute* in Marshall's accusing eyes as he explained to me, over our lamb cutlets, just where Miller went wrong and how important it was to *realise* that he was wrong.

As the evening went on, Marshall got that burdensome material off his chest and seemed more and more ready to relax and enjoy his holiday and the company he was in. Nevertheless, his so recent and so frightful physical ordeal had left marks on him that were still very visible. He seemed nervous, fragile, tense. There had been some talk of my staying the night with them, and I did in fact accompany them to the flat they had rented, but when we got there Corinne pointed to the fact that the guest-room was in some sort of inner recess of the house and that to get out—to the plumbing, for instance—I would have had to come through the room in which Marshall and Corinne slept; and the least sound woke him, he had to be in a totally quiet environment.

I WAS GOING BACK to North Wales the next afternoon, and before I left to find a bed elsewhere Marshall and I agreed to have lunch together in a pub before I took my train. So, about noon, we met again. I can't remember where we were; all I remember was that it was a modest place in a quiet side-street. It was the era when loud juke-boxes in pubs were just coming in; some had them and some didn't, but it had not yet become *de rigueur* for every pub to greet you with a blast of amplified pop music as soon as you opened the door. That came later. This pub had rather loud music, I think from the radio, and Marshall asked the landlord to turn down the volume. He made the request not ingratiatingly but with something like his old authoritarian manner, merely adding by way of explanation, "We're talking." The man, for whatever reason, obeyed.

We sat in the suddenly quiet pub and had bread and cheese and beer and talked as of old, one more in that series of conversations, he expounding and explaining, I listening and

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enjoying the flow and occasionally putting in a question that punted him towards a new pool of ideas: the same series that had been going on for thirteen years since we had first met in Brooklyn Heights. Thirteen years is not very long, and yet I think it must have been a central ridge of my life; looking back, it seems to stretch over an enormous area.

I can't remember what we said, and yet I do remember the feel of it, and that we were as easy as in the early days. Lunchtime over, Corinne came and scooped up Marshall to go home and rest. It seems most likely that she would come in a taxi, and yet my memory shows me a private car: hired, perhaps. They got into the car; I stood on the pavement. As the car moved away down the narrow, airless street, Marshall twisted round on the back seat and waved to me through the window with all his old friendliness. I waved back with all mine.

I never saw him again. He lived almost another ten years—till the last day of 1980—but they were years in which ill health and lowered vitality largely put a stop to his zapping back and forth across the Atlantic; while, in my own case, my life fell apart towards the end of the 1970s and the painful process of gluing it together again was not completed until Marshall had been in his grave for a year. We corresponded, fitfully, and the good will was always there; but after that last London meeting, the relationship between us became one of memory, as it is today. I thought of him often during that last twilight decade, and I think of him often now; with admiration, when I recall the thrust and sweep of his mind, and with affection when I recall his slightly bemused attitude towards that modern world which he claimed, so gallantly, to be able to control by understanding it.

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AUTHORS

William Trevor's story will be included in his latest collection, *Tales from Ireland*, to be published this autumn by Bodley Head. He has also contributed to *The Seven Deadly Sins*, a collection of stories by various hands which Severn House are to bring out in May.

John Wain, poet, literary critic and novelist, was Oxford Professor of Poetry from 1973-78. His recent books include a novel, *Young Shoulders* (winner of the 1982 Whitbread Award), his *Collected Poems, 1949-79*, and a new edition of his biography of Samuel Johnson (all published by Macmillan). His essay on Marshall McLuhan, and his remembrances of his father, "Arnold: An Intimate Portrait" (ENCOUNTER, February 1983), will be included in *Dear Shadows*, a collection of portraits from memory.

Kevin Crossley-Holland's most recent book of poems is *Time's Oriel* (Hutchinson, 1983). He is co-author of *Tales from the "Mabinogion"* (Gollancz, 1984), and this summer Heinemann are to publish his children's book, *Storm*.

Anne Stevenson's poem will be included in her latest collection *The Fiction-Makers*, published this June by Oxford University Press.

Nathan Glick is an American author and editor who now lives in Washington, D.C. His work has often appeared in *Commentary*, where he was for some time film critic, and in *The New Leader* and *The New Republic*. He is currently working on a book to be titled *The City College Generation: Bloomsbury on the City?*.

Max Lerner writes a column for the *New York Post* and the *Los Angeles Times* syndicate, and has been for fifty years a professor of American civilisation at various American universities, most recently at Notre Dame and currently at the US International University at San Diego. He was an editor in the 1930s of the liberal-left *Nation* and in the '40s of the crusading New York City daily "*PM*." Among his books are *Ideas for the Ice Age* (1941, n.e. Greenwood Press, 1981), the monumental *America as a Civilisation* (1957), *The Age of Overkill* (1962), and *Ted and the Kennedy Legend* (1980); he is currently at work on a study of recent Presidents, *The Wounded Titans*. His article in this issue is an expanded version of a piece in *Notre Dame Magazine* (Spring 1985).

Edward Pearce is a leader writer and Parliamentary sketch writer on the *Daily Telegraph* in London. His book *The Senate of Lilliput*, published by Faber in 1983, is to be followed this year by a sequel, *Hummingbirds and Hyenas*.

Jean-François Revel writes a column for the Paris journal *Le Point*; a collection of his pieces, *Le Rejet de l'état*, has just been published by Grasset. His most recently translated work, *How Democracies Perish*, was published this spring by Doubleday (New York) and Weidenfeld (London).

François Bondy is an editor of the monthly *Schweizer Monatshefte* and of *Die Weltwoche* (Zurich). His latest book, *Der Nachkrieg muss kein Vorkrieg sein; Europäische Orientierungen* (Benziger Verlag, Cologne), is an analysis of recent European intellectual trends.

Geoffrey Best, now at the London School of Economics, was Sir Richard Lodge Professor of History at Edinburgh University until 1973, and a Visiting Fellow at the Woodrow Wilson Centre, 1978-79. He retired in 1982 from the Deanship of the School of European Studies at Sussex University in order to write and teach about the international law of war. Among his books are *Honour Among Men and Nations* (University of Toronto Press, 1983) and *Humanity in Warfare* (Methuen, 1983).

Alan Campbell-Johnson is the only surviving member of Mountbatten's staff to have served at his Headquarters in Combined Operations and in South-east Asia, and in a civilian capacity in India. *Mission with Mountbatten*, first published in 1951, is to appear this year in paper back (Hamish Hamilton; Atheneum). His early career was in Liberal politics and in political biography (with studies of Anthony Eden and of Lord Halifax). Before the War, however, he had turned to industrial and commercial public relations; he later set up his own consultancy practice, which after a long association joined forces in 1978 with the firm of Hill and Knowlton.

M. R. D. Foot was an officer in the British Army from 1939-45, including six months as Intelligence Officer of the SAS Brigade. From 1967 to 1973 he was Professor of Modern History at the University of Manchester—his books include the official history of *SOE in France* (1966, n.e. HMSO, 1976), *Resistance* (Methuen, 1976), and *SOE: An Outline History* (BBC Publications, 1984).

Jeffrey Richards, Senior Lecturer in History at Lancaster University, is the author of *Age of the Dream Palace: Cinema and Society in Britain 1930-1939* (Routledge, 1984). He is currently working on a book on British cinema in World War II, *Britain Can Take It*, to be published later this year.

D. C. Stove is a lecturer in the Department of Traditional and Modern Philosophy at the University of Sydney, and author of *Probability and Hume's Inductive Scepticism* (Oxford University Press, 1973), *Popper and After* (Pergamon Press, 1982) and *A Defence of Induction*, to be published by Oxford University Press later this year.

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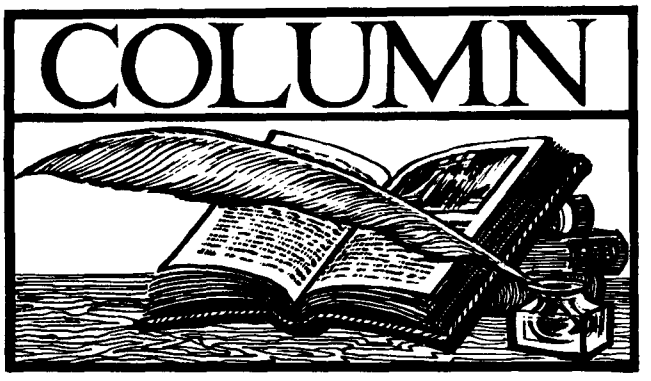

AT SCHOOL, in the early years of World War II, the only serious signs of hostilities were lectures by visiting Generals. Our teachers must have felt that we needed stiffening up. So, every now and then, we assembled in hall for a pep talk. Hough, the aptly named Head Porter, would busy himself with the screen and the magic lantern; a staff car would draw up on the gravelled drive; and out would step a beribboned elderly dug-out with a sheaf of notes and slide cues, to harangue us on some such topic as "The Decisive Battles on the Western Front, 1914-18." Our own interest mainly centred on how often the slides would appear upside-down or back-to-front, or both. A succession of errors with a single slide could win a round of applause. It also brought out some faint echo of what had once made our lecturer The Terror of the Somme, The Fiend of Flanders, or The Hell's Angel of Mons.

Inured to these aged brass hats, we yawned and stretched as usual when a slightly younger one, short and erect, with a beaky nose and a sharp, high-pitched parody of the military voice, came down to tell us how the British Tommy was going to hit Jerry for six. What a cretin, we thought, savouring the clichés in his terse, clipped speech. If we liked Generals at all, we liked them literary: Wavell, say, or even Charles de Gaulle. *This* little nutcracker couldn't have compiled *Other Men's Flowers*, or written *Le fil de l'épée*: his entire vocabulary, it seemed, could have been fitted on to, or taken from, the back of a cigarette-card in a Famous Cricketers series. But by now, I'm sure, you've guessed what fools we were. The name of our latest military lecturer was Bernard Law Montgomery.

It wasn't long before we learned our error; and, in our small way, we learned to appreciate Monty's strength. He came down several times thereafter, since ours was his old school; he judged boxing matches in which our thin, pale, skilful fighters knocked out privates in the Pioneer Corps; he even, on one occasion, decreed that our waterlogged slit trenches be turned into an assault course. Soon, our officer trainees had the best waterlogged assault course in Southern Command. But at least we knew that Montgomery meant business. As he himself might have put it, you must lick 'em into shape while they're young.

I remembered that short, charismatic figure—and our conceited disdain—as I lay awake engrossed in the second volume of Nigel Hamilton's masterly biography, *Monty: Master of the Battlefield 1942-1944*.[1] Military history is no more my forte than it's Hamilton's: but his subject, and his sense of the dramatic, make this nascent 2,400-page three-decker a racing read. At its heart is the Monty enigma: an austere showman, a single-minded professional with extraordinary vanity, a cautious soldier with immense courage and dash, a disciplinarian who unbent in private, an affectionate husband and father whose job it was to kill. How much Monty's public flamboyance, like Mountbatten's, was shrewd PR, and how much love of publicity; how much his ruthless determination derived from being an outsider (like Mountbatten again), how much he tidied his own record: these are the questions that keep recurring as the narrative speeds on. In the preface to this volume, Nigel Hamilton quotes Walter Bedell Smith's famous remark to Montgomery: "You may be great to serve under, difficult to serve alongside, but you sure are hell to serve over!" Monty was to prove all three propositions, again and again. He also came very close to proving a more subversive suggestion: that all great military commanders must *ipso facto* be slightly mad.

I SAID "very close": I don't mean to imply that Monty was in any sense unhinged. One of his great qualities was to expect the best of everyone, and to care for his men. He had an exhaustive memory, as well as a keen and orderly mind; and he was interested in people. Usually, he judged them well. Above all, he realised that battles are won by morale as well as by speed, adroitness, fire-power, administration, communications, supplies, and forward planning. After El Alamein, Rommel may have escaped, but he was on the run and afraid, while Montgomery's men were beginning to feel like an élite. To have served under him and survived, still more to have been applauded, was as good as having earned most decorations.

But building an élite, as Montgomery knew, must be a deliberate process. In one sense, it meant infecting his men with a touch of what civilians might well find "madness." Soon after his Alamein victory, on 27 November 1942, Montgomery wrote to General Brooke, the chief of the Imperial General Staff:

> "The trouble with our British lads is that they are not killers by nature; they have got to be so inspired that they will want to kill, and that is what I tried to do with this Army of mine."

The words read chillingly now—but they have to be read in the context of the time. A real killer ruled Germany and Austria, and had occupied most of Europe; millions were dying as a result. Civilians had to rouse themselves; non-professional armies had to become lethal war machines. Hence the need for what later, softer generations would come to call "hype." Hearing recordings of wartime broadcasts, it's hard to avoid feeling they're overdone, full of public-school accents and gung-ho slang. But that's the way it was. The Colditz series on British television was far closer to past reality than many a squeamish reinterpretation. People

[1] *Monty: Master of the Battlefield 1942-1944*. By NIGEL HAMILTON. Coronet Books. £4.95.

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actually *said* things like "Let's have a *shufti*" and "Cracking good show."

EVEN GEORGE ORWELL wasn't immune to the wartime atmosphere. When he became a BBC Talks Producer in the Eastern Service, broadcasting to India, he was denounced by several pacifists, including the anarchist George Woodcock, for "conducting British propaganda to fox the Indian masses." The propaganda charge was untrue; but some sleuthing in the BBC archives has produced documentation to support the renewed patriotism that Orwell in any case proclaimed in several wartime essays. *Orwell: The War Broadcasts*[2] is the first of two volumes: the second, to be called *Through Eastern Eyes*, promises more broadcasts and fewer administrative memos. The latter are chiefly notable for the light they shed on Britain's (not the BBC's) timorous censors; but the rather sparse glimpses here of Orwell's scripts do contain revealing remarks.

> "We laughed at Marshal Goering when he said, some years before the war, that Germany had to choose between guns and butter, but he was only wrong in the sense that there was no need for Germany to prepare aggression against her neighbours and thus plunge the whole world into war. Once war has started, every nation has to choose between guns and butter. It is merely a question of proportion."

The final qualification was uncharacteristic of Orwell's knock-'em-down, drag-'em-out polemics; but in the second number of *Voice*, a broadcast magazine devoted chiefly to poetry, he expressed more sharply what he and many others had come to believe. "I mean", he said, "one can feel the war is not merely a disagreeable necessity, but that it is spiritually better than peace—the kind of peace you have in Vichy France, for instance. . . ."

It was in this spirit that, as Nigel Hamilton records, "Wounded men began to refuse to go into holding units on leaving hospital, but would instead disobey the regulations and rejoin their regiments in the field—for to fight with Eighth Army was now a matter of personal honour." Personally, I still find that quite natural: but I may be just showing my age. A few years ago, compiling a broadcast series about how children in various countries now imagine World War II, I was chatting over lunch with the producer, born in the early 1940s. "You know", he said, "it's incomprehensible to me how anyone could risk his life for his country." I nearly upset the table—not to mention the series. Here, forty years later, was a private, individual rerun of the famous pre-War Oxford Union vote which some thought had spurred Hitler on.

I don't know how general my producer's sentiments are. I have a suspicion, though, that very many people in the West are similarly civilianised. Coming back to Britain after many years' absence, I was struck by how plump and soft people seemed, how keen on gadgets and comfort, DIY domesticity, gourmet cooking, colour-supplement spending sprees, respectable gambling, hard liquor and soft drugs. Even agonised joggers, gasping in time to their Sony Walkmans, were really trying to stave off death. Perhaps, lacking religion, we've all embraced hedonism, a nation of Citizen Kanes clinging to Rosebud while we may. Fate, accidents, misadventures: all of them, now, seem to need insurance payouts or awards by tribunals. The Great Reaper himself awaits us all, but we like to forget him, and our dependents will no doubt sue for compensation. We've come a long way from Halfaya Pass.

HOW FAR, and how insouciantly, I began to realise when dipping into Anna Ford's "documentary" *Men*.[3] In case you've missed this long-heralded product of charm and the tape-recorder, *Men* is a kind of written-down radio programme in which confessions by the contributors are interspersed with a linking script. Anna Ford has altered the witnesses' names and occupations to avoid identification—and no wonder: to judge from some of the evidence here, the book might be retitled *Sewers*, or *Slobs*. I don't know how much of it to believe: a few exhibitionists, no doubt, were drawn into lubricious fantasy by their interviewer's fame and beauty. What really surprised me, however, was Anna Ford's surprise at her own findings.

> "I had always thought that, with a few obvious differences, man and woman were much alike, human beings with similar talents, anxieties, capacities and failings. What surprised me most about listening to so many men talking about themselves was how *completely* different they were from women in a number of significant ways. . . .
>
> My overall impression is that the world men inhabit, and from which we women are often excluded, is rather bleak. It is a world full of doubt and confusion, where vulnerability must be hidden, not shared; where competition, not co-operation, is the order of the day. . . . As a woman, I was struck by the sense of detachment many men feel from those around them, and saddened by it. I am used to women practising the skills that break down these barriers, and know what pleasures this can bring; but many men see no use in trying to understand themselves or others better, because they believe human nature is unchanging. They also mistrust the exploration of feelings and see it as a time-wasting activity indulged in by over-talkative women."

Right on, Ms Ford. Many men do have this atavistic attitude: they justify it "more often than not by the theory that nature has made man the strong one, the hunter, the fighter and protector, and any change in this system would overthrow a natural and desirable balance." What Anna Ford also points out, however, is that "Some men *are* beginning to voice their rejection of the male stereotype, for they are outgrowing the uncomfortable straitjacket of traditional masculinity."

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[2] *Orwell: The War Broadcasts*. Edited with an Introduction by W. J. WEST. Duckworth/British Broadcasting Corporation, £12.95.

[3] *Men: A Documentary*. By ANNA FORD. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £10.95.

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When I read this, I feel torn. Monty, I imagine, would be turning in his grave; but the fact is that men, too, have feelings, are sensitive and vulnerable, and need companionship. Yet, in the world outside the family, they're often obliged to override their emotions. Why? Because competitors and enemies do so, threatening the peaceful citadel in which we can choose butter and coffee mornings instead of guns. We may face low-wage industrial producers, or whizz-kid entrepreneurs: we may be in danger from IRA fanatics, *kamikaze* pilots, or Shia Muslims, all with a firm and dangerous belief in the afterlife. So, however many of us "outgrow" the masculine stereotype, we're still going to need warriors, however abrasive, lonely, unhappy, or apparently mad. Civilisation and civilianisation can never be quite the same.

THE CONTRAST BETWEEN THEM became spectacular during the Viet Nam war. At home, deeply civilianised TV viewers confronted killing in full colour: it's never been an attractive sight. Revolted, they rebelled—less against the cause, which looks more reasonable now, than against the involvement. Meanwhile, at the front, some soldiers at least were proving how civilised they were. A few were scared and brutal; many were simple-minded, describing the enemy as "the bad guys"—a phrase to curl the toes of ethical philosophers. But, even in a war so unpopular and so disputed, civilised scruples still came to the fore. "The bad guys" took their losses and abandoned their wounded: what mattered to them was the collectivity, not the individual—a note towards the definition of "bad"? The United States lost aircraft and helicopters, at heaven knows what cost to the taxpayer, to try to rescue one single stranded pilot, Lance Sijan. That, surely, is one of the things that "civilised" means.

Sijan's amazing story is the subject of *Into the Mouth of the Cat*, by Malcolm McConnell.[4] It's a brassily written book, all technological swagger. "The helicopter's huge five-bladed main rotor cut from hover to a coarser pitch as three thousand horsepower engaged the rotor shaft from the two whining turbine engines"—that sort of Boy's Own stuff. But the tale it tells is worth the bombast. Downed in the mountain jungle of Laos, hideously wounded, Lance Sijan dragged himself on his back, without food and with very little water, through enemy patrols, until he was finally captured on Christmas Day. In a holding camp, he overpowered a guard and escaped again, still unable to do more than crawl. Recaptured and tortured, he resisted interrogation; two weeks later, in Hanoi, he died. When fellow prisoners revealed his heroism, Lance Sijan was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor. What his odyssey proves is a matter for the reader. That brave men can still be ready to die in an uncertain cause? That man's spirit is unquenchable? That war can bring out the best as well as the worst in people? That armchair critics of soldiers should mind their manners? I'll settle for all of those; and I'll never again be quite so snide about visiting Generals.

M

[4] *Into the Mouth of the Cat: The Story of Lance Sijan, Hero of Vietnam*. By MALCOLM MCCONNELL. W. W. Norton, $13.95.

Too Much Sunshine Makes a Desert

After so many easy wars
victories so one-sided
almost unopposed

and the shameless self-congratulation
parading in the drawing-rooms
amid the fluted columns and the gilt

could anyone have taken heed of warnings?
would anyone have been prepared
by word or deed
for the cross-fire that is surely waiting
in the no man's land between determinations
the mud by the stumps of trees
the shell-holes inadequate to hide a man
the momentary shelter without hope of lasting?

with all those plans of copy-book manoeuvre
classical envelopment
could any conscript have been trained
for this?—
to move as though they were truly moving
the poor bloody infantry
scuttling back to their protective trenches
and the pre-war blondes
who only a few months before
when cavalry calypsoed by
a shining sea upon the cobbles
swayed halfway out of windows
fanning gales of flags
a foam of petals
all winds deployed
to a heroic mettle

without a thought
for splintered bones, or wills, or branches
locked in as machine-gun nests
from which mere birds
like an exploding shell
have blown?

François Duchêne

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Kevin Crossley-Holland

Orkney Girls

1. Girls at Skara Brae

The place is a hiss.
The cells
and passages and womb-houses, runes
of sandstone under their turf skin,
all of them defused, bleached
into static.
Turn your back
on the usual slop and clout
and the summer blandishments
winking in the meadow.
Then enter.
listen . . . .
In the white wave
are the hiccups and polyps
and such subtle modulations
the heart decodes.
Nothing singular,
but in this sunken room
amongst dresser, hearth and cot,
shafted by sunlight, repossessed
after five thousand winters,
this persistent broken
singing:
Spring and a necklace . . .
scattered seed . . . now and here
and now . . . all our ripening.

2. The Girl at Gurness

I become little more than a voice:
a bruck of bones earth-fingered,
all unravelled and unlimbed
by salts and seep and vapours.

There! The whale-path to a farm
on a fiord, a girl in sunlight;
that road to the Irishman, clover
on his tongue, and the whirlpool of love,
and that is the way of the dove
to Jorsala. I have no knowledge
of where that way leads my brothers
with blooming axe and scramasax.

I am only in shadow saying,
Look at the rib of water passing—
the show of aquamarine, limpid,
and the lumpen everyday swell,
the furious spears of black-and-silver;
saying, Look at the shift of light
gilding the bare breasts of Rousay.

The wind is a wearisome impartial
scold. Think of the ways you also
took, or did not take . . . .

(Mouth stopped. Two shoulder brooches.
An iron knife. Also lobster-shell,
an unbroken necklace, blushing pink-and-lilac.)

3. Stromness Girl

Her father's fathers came in
from the north, brewing and salty,
the women from the south and west—
violet Caithness, the concealments of Antrim,
locking the flint-grey ring.

Red ribbon in her hair, parts her lips . . . .

Her subject is the smash and glimmer,
that sweep of the scythe intent
on shearing. After which there is
poor rest, no terra firma, risky footing.

Eyes lace agate. Painted shell necklace . . . .

Oyster and pearl, not one wrinkle:
she tells of seeming and dissimulation,
elaborate surface tension above
the röst blood-dark and churning.

Glib. All glitter. Flashy rings . . . .

Does not walk so much as slide
and swing. Wholly abandoned
to her legend, she shrieks with laughter,
collapses, sobs on any shoulder.

I am what you want only . . . .

Gags first on a skuther of gutturals,
softens, sideways drifts in a mirror
of assonance. How her old story still
enthrals us. Shape-shifter
at the whirlpool that grinds men to dust.

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Anne Stevenson

Hands

Made up in death as never in life,
mother's face was a mask
set in museum satin.

But her hands. In her hands
resting not crossing on her paisley dress
(deep combs of her pores,

her windfall palms, familiar routes
on maps not entirely hers
in those stifling flowers) lay

a great many shards of lost hours
with her growing children. As when,
tossing my bike

on the greypainted backyard stairs,
I pitched myself up, through the screen door
arguing with my sister. "Me? Marry?

Never! Unless I can marry a genius."
I was in love with Mr Wullover,
a pianist.

Mother's hands moved *staccato* on a fat ham
she was pricking with cloves.
"You'll be lucky, I'd say, to marry a kind man."

I was aghast.
If you couldn't be a genius, at least
you could marry one. How else would you last?

My sister was conspiring to marry her violin teacher.
Why shouldn't I marry a piano
in Mr Wullover?

As it turned out, Mr Wullover died
ten years before my mother.
Suicide on the eve of his wedding, O, to another.

No one said much about why at home. At school
Jenny told me in her Frankenstein whisper,
"He was gay!"

Gay? And wasn't it a good loving thing
to be gay? As good as to be kind
I thought then,

and said as much to my silent mother
as she wrung out a cloth until her knuckles shone.
white bone under raw thin skin.

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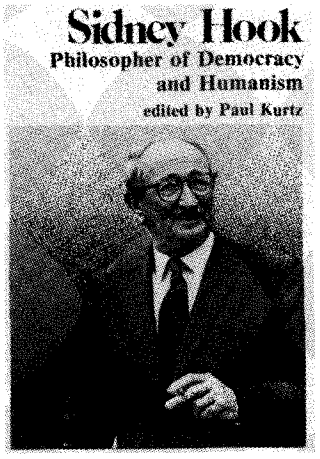
Sidney Hook, Embattled Philosopher

On America's Leading Polemicist—By NATHAN GLICK



NOW IN his ninth decade, Sidney Hook can claim a greater number of distinctive achievements than any American intellectual of his generation. He was our first serious Marxist scholar. He was the only philosopher of note to involve himself in the ideological controversies of left-wing politics, and remains even today the most vocal and clear-headed critic of Stalinism and its apologists. He has been the leading expositor of pragmatism as a theory of knowledge and of secular humanism as a basis for ethics. Since the deaths of Morris R. Cohen and John Dewey he has been, in a period dominated by analytic and linguistic philosophies, one of the few members of his profession read by non-professionals who has addressed himself to the great classical subjects of philosophy: truth, justice, ethics and religion. As a teacher for 40 years (and chairman of the philosophy department at New York University for 20) he became a legendary figure for the brilliance of his lectures and the logical rigour he demanded of his students. And despite his often unpopular stances and peppery personality, he has done more than anyone else to bring philosophers of widely divergent views together in symposia, conferences, and informal exchanges.[1]

Yet many who encountered Sidney Hook in a classroom or on the printed page felt his influence in a more personal way. For them, he showed by example that public affairs could be intellectually challenging and public debate a zestful occupation, demanding information, logic, wit, and the ability to sustain an argument against even the most cogent of counter-arguments. As a very young socialist in the mid-1930s, I first discovered the name of Sidney Hook in the pages of *The Modern Monthly*, an independent radical magazine in which Hook and Max Eastman, who had a New Englander's resistance to the Teutonic pomposity of Hegelian metaphysics, conducted a running debate over the proper interpretation of Karl Marx. Hook has since ruefully admitted that Eastman may have been largely accurate when he charged Hook with offering a "heavily Dewey-flavoured Marxism" as the real thing. For aspiring young polemicists of the Left their exchanges were intoxicating models of intellectual combat, joining literary verve (mainly Eastman's) with philosophical flair (mainly Hook's), each thrust utterly persuasive . . . until one read the counter-thrust. I remained non-aligned on the issues debated, but became aware early in my political education that Marxism was a far more intricate and ambiguous set of texts than the more orthodox pamphlets and journals suggested. Although Eastman may have had the better of the argument, it was Hook who introduced the greater range of ideas and referred to sources and passages that encouraged the reader to continue learning.[2]

In an age of ideological fanaticism, when abuse and insinuation have too often replaced logical analysis or the careful citing of evidence, one of Hook's most useful contributions to democratic vitality has been his insistence on and exemplification of a scrupulous style of public debate. Writing on "The Ethics of Controversy", Hook lists among his ten ground rules:

> "*Before* impugning an opponent's motives, even when they legitimately may be impugned, answer his arguments."

Also:

> "Do not treat an opponent of a policy as if he were therefore a personal enemy or an enemy of the country or a concealed enemy of democracy."

In 1953 Hook called for a national movement to retire Senator Joseph McCarthy from public life, because his lies and indiscriminate accusations were undermining the efforts of honest and knowledgeable critics of communism.

> "Certain methods of controversy [he wrote in 1954] poison instead of refresh the lifeblood of democracy. . . . They seek to discredit persons rather than to consider problems.

[1] See Lewis Feuer, "The Pragmatic Wisdom of Sidney Hook", ENCOUNTER, October 1975.

[2] In his memoir *Great Companions* (1959), Eastman recalls that he once asked John Dewey, teacher and friend to both of them, to preside at a debate on the question: "Was Marx a scientific pragmatist?" "Dewey protested that he didn't know enough of Marx to qualify, then added (to my gratification), 'When I talk with you I incline to think you must be right, and the same—in reverse—when I talk to Sidney. This is doubtless a deplorable confession but there it is. . . .'"

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> They ignore or suppress relevant evidence. They aim to create a mood of refusal to listen to views challenging some favoured or dominant notions."

Although at the time Hook had McCarthyites, Stalinists, and "knee-jerk liberals" in mind, he also anticipated the tactics and goals of "New Left" militants in the 1960s, for whom "free speech" meant not the right to express their views but to impose them.

No one else in the United States over the past half-century has so persistently and so rigorously brought the tools of scientific method—objectivity, reasoning, syllogisms, evidence and ethics—to bear on the public discussion of social and political issues, from American foreign policy to US Supreme Court decisions. One contributor to the recent *Festschrift* for Sidney Hook has speculated that, had he gone in for law instead of philosophy, he might have been "the outstanding jurist of this century" because of his gift for clarifying the larger implications inherent in any specific issue of social policy. Even at his most polemical Hook remains a teacher, instructing us on the rules of debate, the weighing of facts and documents, the legitimacy of inference and interpretation. I have heard several of his former students complain that he was severe and caustic toward opinions he disapproved of (others said he was impatient only with lazy or sloppy thinking). Hook was certainly aware, from his own experience as a student, of the dangers of professorial arrogance. In a memoir of his first inspiring teacher, Morris Raphael Cohen at the City College of New York, Hook remarks that Cohen's famous Socratic method (a relentless series of pointed questions that invariably led the student to contradict himself) would have been equally effective and less psychologically devastating without "the sarcasm and absence of simple courtesy that marked his dialectical interrogation." By the testimony of colleagues and students, Hook as a teacher always encouraged the give-and-take of ideas, and his gift for creating intellectual excitement was reflected in the enormous popularity of his courses.

MY OWN ACADEMIC EXPOSURE TO Hook came in the form of public lectures on 20th-century philosophy at the New School for Social Research. I remember most vividly his exposition of Henri Bergson's *élan vital* and George Santayana's part-religious, part-materialist "realms of being"—two outlooks light years distant from Hook's own pragmatic, Deweyan experimentalism. For the first hour in each lecture, Hook offered the most sympathetic, concise, persuasive summary of Bergson's and Santayana's arguments. Then in the time remaining he raised all of the counter-arguments based on scientific method and a secular humanist perspective. Hook won hands down on pure logic, but his eminently sensible position was not, I confess, as temperamentally intriguing as Bergson's or Santayana's.

In political controversy too, Hook found that to be on the side of hard facts and cold logic did not always fulfil his audience's emotional needs. He has been a sober, relentless critic of ideologies that aroused righteous passions—from Stalinism to "Affirmative Action" quotas—but failed to meet his standards of fairness, evidence, and open debate. The history of political allegiances in the past half-century suggests forcibly enough that clever journalists and learned university teachers are as susceptible to irrational enthusiasms as any wild mob of plebs. Sidney Hook has taken on the usually thankless, but therapeutically essential task of questioning political diagnoses and panaceas that seemed at the moment to be culturally fashionable. It surely requires an extra measure of intellectual energy and fortitude to be willing so often, and for so long, to swim against the current. He has appropriately titled his forthcoming autobiography *Out of Step*. As a convinced Marxist in the late 1920s and early '30s, he defied the orthodoxies emanating from Moscow, denouncing in 1934 the "horrendous excrescences" in the Soviet Union which he traced to "the undemocratic domination of the undemocratic Communist Party *over the entire fabric of social life.*" (My italics. This must have been one of the earliest formulations of the unique character of *totalitarianism*, a term Hook was almost alone in using in the late 1930s, more than a decade before Hannah Arendt's broader exploration of the concept in *The Origins of Totalitarianism.*) As a liberal in the 1940s and '50s, he made a distinction between Heresy and Conspiracy that many softer-hearted and softer-headed liberals failed to recognise.[3] Coming down to the 1970s and 1980s, Hook departs from his neo-conservative friends in proclaiming himself a social democrat, or a "democratic market-socialist", one who rejects wholesale nationalisation and concentrated government power but believes that government has a moral responsibility to mitigate the harsher effects of a free-enterprise economy.

I HAVE SO FAR BEEN describing the public Sidney Hook, the influential teacher and political gadfly, and he makes a substantial appearance in the *Festschrift* [4] collected by Paul Kurtz from 25 friends and former students on the occasion of Hook's 80th birthday. But the book is dominated by another Hook, the professional philosopher who was once president of the American Philosophical Association (Eastern Division), who keeps up with the major currents in contemporary philosophy, who writes (always cogently, sometimes eloquently) on the metaphysics of pragmatism, existentialist

[3] And that some seemed deliberately to misread. Thus Christopher Lasch in *The Agony of the American Left* (1969) claims that this distinction "did not lead Hook to conclude that communism, in so far as it was a heresy as opposed to a conspiracy, was entitled to constitutional protection." Yet Hook had written quite plainly: "The right to profess and advocate heresy of any character, including communism, is an essential element of a liberal society." More recently, in the course of a generally—and surprisingly—knowledgeable and even admiring article about Hook in the New York left-liberal *Village Voice* (13 March 1984), Paul Berman had him advocating that government should "grill teachers and conduct a political purge." In fact, Hook opposed any government involvement in the hiring or firing of teachers, suggesting only that membership in the Communist Party and acceptance of its discipline and its instructions to proselytise and, if necessary, lie were relevant factors for school administrators to consider, not grounds for automatic exclusion.

[4] *Sidney Hook: Philosopher of Democracy and Humanism.* Edited by PAUL KURTZ. Prometheus Books, $18.95.

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religion, John Dewey's ethics, determinism and freedom, the hero in history, problems of language, and the tragic sense of life. And as befits a man with an irrepressible knack for generating controversy, a number of his admirers take the occasion to argue with him. Richard Rorty and Daniel Bell question in different ways the all-embracing scientistic bias of Hook's pragmatism—"all knowledge that men have is scientific knowledge"—which, for Rorty, does not adequately recognise the autonomous value of the visions provided by art and religion and, for Bell, neglects the "cultural universals" arising out of common existentialist predicaments such as death, obligation, love, tragedy. Even Milton R. Konvitz, whose essay sympathetically summarises a wide range of Hook's views, cannot help noting that Hook's rejection of any single ultimate value is contradicted by his fervent apotheosis of human freedom.[5] A conservative British philosopher, Antony Flew, hammers away, Hayek-style, at Hook's unregenerate and clearly sentimental use of the term "socialism" to describe something very different, namely a mixed economy as the basis of a democratic welfare state. And his old comrade in political wars, Irving Kristol, finds Sidney sadly "tone-deaf" to the religious dimension of human experience, whereas "I have had the kind of persistent metaphysical itch that favorably disposed me to religion (or at least to religiosity) in general and made it impossible for me ever to take secular humanism seriously as an intellectual option. . . ."

Hook may be constitutionally immune to the religious impulse, as Kristol suggests, but he is fascinated by the subject of religion and has certainly written more about it than any other contemporary philosopher professing atheism. And significantly, he remained close friends with some of the most famous expositors of religion, men like Reinhold Niebuhr, Paul Tillich, Jacques Maritain.

Most of Hook's writing on religion falls into two areas. On the political level, he conducts a polemic against those, like T. S. Eliot and Arnold Toynbee, who would use religion to justify authoritarian doctrines, or—at the other extreme—against those who insist that democracy is impossible without a religious underpinning. On the philosophical level, he engages in a recondite discourse on the propriety of postulating an ultimate cause, in response to which Hook can be intricate in extended argument or else pithy and Humean in his cogent (if arguable) parries:

> "There are no ultimate questions: only penultimate ones. Because if an answer to a causal question is intelligible, we can always ask another causal question about it."

One of Hook's frustrations is that his favourite opponents invariably elude his logical strictures and venture into realms closed to him. When attacked by Hook, Tillich always replied: "I agree with everything you have said . . ." and Hook found himself "embraced as a fellow religionist crusading for the Holy Grail of Being." About Niebuhr's concept of the mystery of the Christian faith, he writes affectionately: "To hold him to rigorous analytic discourse would be like imposing a proper logical syntax upon a poem." And Jacques Maritain said he loved to debate with Hook because he felt that if he could only find the perfect argument he would be able to convert him—a tribute to Hook's openness and passion for reasoned discourse.[6]

HOOK IS SUCH A formidable polemicist—even his old antagonist Max Eastman called him "our most brilliant debater"—that it is touching to find him on occasion straying from his customary certainty about the adequacy of scientific method, or at least its superiority to any alternative. In his essay on Tillich he writes:

> "It may be that I am too literal-minded and old-fashioned, prepared to pay too high a price for clarity."

True, he then proceeds to reject the notion, but it is admirable that he should even entertain it. Or again, in a rare moment of poetic feeling and psychological insight, he notes that "democracy is like love in this: It cannot be brought to life in others by command. Shared experience, sympathetic understanding, and good works are ultimately the best nourishment for democratic convictions." Or he confesses that "Temperamentally I have always found Russell and Cohen more congenial than Dewey. They are philosophers of the clean line, incisive, witty, rarely hesitant about sacrificing the dull or exact truth for the sake of a *bon mot*." Occasionally Hook has himself given in to this temptation. I recall his riposte to an article by Cohen cautioning against applying political terms like "capitalism" and "socialism" too mechanically. New York, Cohen asserted, was socialist in so far as it owned the subways, the bus lines, and the reservoirs. "Professor Cohen", Hook replied, "cannot wash away the sins of capitalism with New York City's water supply." More recently, piqued by Michael Harrington's embrace of a dubious and esoteric Marxism in *The Twilight of Capitalism*, Hook called the book

> "an additional argument against immortality. For if the human spirit survived the death of the body, Marx would have risen from his grave at Highgate in thundering protest. In life his fury exploded at lesser provocations."

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[5] Following the traditional biographical and bibliographical notes in *Who's Who in America*, Hook added a startlingly passionate statement which has since been widely quoted:

> "It is better to be a live jackal than a dead lion—for jackals, not men. Men who have the moral courage to fight intelligently for freedom have the best prospects of avoiding the fate of both live jackals and dead lions. Survival is not the be-all and end-all of a life worthy of man. Sometimes the worst thing we can know about a man is that he has survived. Those who say life is worth living at any cost have already written for themselves an epitaph of infamy, for there is no cause and no person they will not betray to stay alive. Man's vocation should be the use of the arts of intelligence in behalf of human freedom."

[6] In a recent interview, on the occasion of his 1984 Jefferson Lectures, sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities, he made this rather disarmingly mellow comment:

> "I never could understand how an all-powerful God who is also all-loving could permit the innocent to suffer and the guilty to prosper. I have no objection to other people's belief. Indeed I may be mistaken. I may, when I die, wake up in the presence of the Almighty and if he were to ask me why I did not express my belief in Him, I would reply, 'Lord, you did not give me enough evidence.'"

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Despite such rhetorical lapses, Hook remains America's coolest and most persistent representative of the rational and secular temperament, which he has contrasted to the religious temperament as preferring action to passivity, variety to order, and "the stern and cheerless visage of the truth about man's tragic estate" to the consolations of a supernatural faith. But Hook's treatment of religion has generally neglected two attributes that are associated with the religious temperament although they need not belong exclusively in that domain. One concerns those intuitive responses—the choice of friends or lovers, the impulse to sacrifice for another person, the awareness of what others are feeling—which may clash with rational or logical calculation, yet constitute a large part of our daily lives. The second is the sense of wonder, the feeling that we are tiny particles of a vast universe whose harmonies and meanings we can only glimpse, the idea of mysteries beyond the reach of intelligence—such intimations of mortality or immortality are not often dreamt of in Hook's philosophy.

Nor do the arts play much of a role in his writing. There is almost no reference to fiction, poetry, painting, music, theatre or film, despite the fact that many of his friends in the old *Partisan Review* circle were conspicuously involved in literature and the arts. Perhaps it is unfair to ask that Hook's range be all-embracing. He has chosen the large arena of public discourse on political, social, and philosophical issues. And on these matters he is sensible, coherent, judicious, analytical, and a solid rock of common sense in a period much given to dogma, arbitrary judgment, personal attacks and ideological fervour. It may be true that by basing morality purely on a reasoned examination of human relations, Hook's secular humanism minimises the instinctive way in which people do in fact make moral choices. On the other hand, when two equally accepted moral values are in conflict in a particular situation, neither theological authority nor unexamined impulse seems superior to the use of rational intelligence to estimate consequences and make the least harmful choices—and this brings us back to Hook's and Dewey's pragmatic territory.

An episode recalled by Hook in a lively memoir of John Dewey demonstrates that even friendly secular humanists have their quarrels, rooted in clashing temperaments and intellectual styles. Thus Hook, partial to the no-holds-barred stance of a Brooklyn-born "street-brawler and political activist" (as he once described his youthful self), protested against Dewey's use of the term "God" in *A Common Faith* as an unnecessary verbal concession to the anti-naturalists. But Dewey, born and raised in rural Vermont, was less embattled and thought the use of the word helped to convey man's connection with the imagined universe, the union of the actual and the ideal, for people who, while not doctrinally religious, "would feel a loss if they could not speak of God. Why then shouldn't I use the term. . . ?" Hook relates this episode with obvious affection and one suspects he was drawn to Dewey not only because he found the older man's philosophy congenial, but because Dewey's gentleness and sweetness of character tempered his own taste for the blunt polemical assault.

If John Dewey was Hook's major mentor in his lifetime, Karl Marx was undeniably the greatest influence on Hook's intellectual development among earlier thinkers. *Marxism and Beyond*, a collection of 18 articles written over the past ten years,[7] reminds us that Hook was the first American to ransack the Marx-Engels Institute in Moscow in the late 1920s and had evidently read all of Marx in the original German. His early books, *Toward the Understanding of Karl Marx* and *From Hegel to Marx*, have been recognised as classics in their genre, although Hook would admit today that they reflected an excessively reverential attitude. Some of the clearest statements of Hook's revised estimate of what is valid and what is not in Marxism can be found in the opening essays of *Marxism and Beyond*, which expand on the more systematic textbook-style *Marx and the Marxists: The Ambiguous Legacy* of 1955. In an essay titled "Myth and Fact in the Marxist Theory of Revolution", he cites some of Marx's errors and limitations:

> "He underestimated the capacity of capitalist societies to raise the standard of living of its population, including even the longevity of the working class; he underestimated the growth and intensity of nationalism; he was mistaken in interpreting all forms of coercion and exploitation as flowing from private ownership of the social means of production; he ignored the prospect of bureaucratic forms of collectivism; and the very real possibility of war between collectivist economies, illustrated in the nuclear threat of Communist Russia against Communist China, was inconceivable to him by definition. He shared the naivety of anarchist thinkers in believing that the state would disappear with universal collectivism. . . . He underestimated the role of personality in history. . . . 'Marxism' today signifies an ideology in Marx's original sense of that term, suggestive more of a religious than of a strictly scientific or rational outlook on society."

Hook's own surrender of the claim to be a Marxist occurred in 1947, reluctantly but good-naturedly. "It would appear", he wrote,

> "that if I were justified in my interpretation of Marx's meaning, I would be perhaps the only true Marxist left in the world. This is too much for my sense of humour, and so I have decided to abandon the term as a descriptive epithet of my position."

Yet despite his pungent criticisms of Marx's historical determinism, economic predictions and philosophical ambiguities, Hook admires Marx in an almost proprietary way, portraying him (in contrast to Lenin, Stalin and Trotsky) as a sturdy advocate of political democracy and individual freedom. If he is right—and he makes a persuasive though not an impeccable case—critics of communism might be wise to avoid indiscriminately lumping together Marxism and Leninism, but instead to cite Marx in his democratic phase against the Leninist apologists for dictatorship. Hook also insists on the authenticity of the familiar "scientific" Marx against the callow

[7] *Marxism and Beyond*. By Sidney Hook. Rowman and Littlefield. $19.95.

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revisionists who have suddenly discovered an anarchist, or existentialist, or psychologically subjectivist, or poetically visionary Marx. He is interested in focusing on those elements of Marxism that had historical weight and actual influence on parties, programmes, and events. A critic of all determinist theories, he argues (against orthodox Marxists and orthodox free-marketeers alike) that history proves political structures and traditions to be at least as crucial as the economic mode of production in affecting a country's evolution. Where democratic institutions were firmly in place, neither Economic Depression nor Welfare Statism diminished individual liberties. On the other hand, the same predominantly "capitalist mode of production" could in 1932 lead to Nazism or to the New Deal.

Several essays in *Marxism and Beyond* insist that the libertarian case against socialism lacks the clinching example of an established political democracy combined with an advanced capitalist economy placing all major industries, or what Nye Bevan liked to call "the commanding heights of the economy", under government ownership. Yet while he makes this logical-historical point, Hook is sufficiently wary of the totalitarian potential of a socialised economy to advocate retention in his "social democratic" welfare state of a large private sector, not only to protect political freedom but also to encourage economic initiative and productivity. Ernst Reuter's Social-Democratic formula in post-War Berlin was "as little control as is necessary, as much freedom as is possible." Hook's present stance represents a significant departure from his more sanguine belief, as late as the 1940s, in the compatibility of across-the-board nationalisation and political democracy, although even then he argued that "certain areas" of the economy should be "planfully left to free enterprise." He was encouraged in his optimism at that time by the fact that, contrary to his own and others' dark forebodings, wartime centralised controls in England and the United States had not perceptibly undermined civil liberties. Today his views support the flexible mixed economy advocated by the late Tony Crosland in the British Labour Party and by the Bad Godesberg programme of the German *SPD*, the adoption of which Hook sees as a vindication of Eduard Bernstein's pragmatic and ethical revisions of Marxist orthodoxy. On both the English and the German Left these views are now under heavy fire from the born-again dogmatists.

Several recent books and mushrooming university courses suggest that there has lately been a revival of Marxist allegiance and scholarship on American campuses. Why, one wonders, does Marx remain so attractive to academics (and almost solely to academics, since it is a rare proletarian who reads *Das Kapital*) despite the turgidity of much of his writing, despite the devastating judgment of historical events on his predictions and his prescriptions? Why, indeed, does Sidney Hook, having transferred his loyalties from Marx to Dewey, take every nuance of misinterpretation of Marx so seriously? The answer seems to lie in the intoxicating sweep of Marxist rhetoric. It may be that the "metaphysical itch" that turns a Kristol to religion is transferred in others to grand historical speculation. In both cases, there seems to be a need for a forceful paternal authority (who first noted that the bearded visage of Marx was not entirely dissimilar to Michelangelo's depiction of God in the Sistine Chapel?) and a privileged revelation of the true patterns of human behaviour.

But Sidney Hook, happily, ranges far beyond Marxism into a multitude of philosophical, political, educational and legal issues. Most surprising to someone who has been mainly exposed to Hook's political writings is the sensitivity of his views on ethics and morality (discussed with great clarity by Paul Kurtz). For Hook moral predicaments arise because equally cherished values often clash:

> "Our agony of choice results from the realisation that right conflicts with right, good with good and sometimes the right with the good. We want both security and adventure and can't have both. We want to be just but discover we cannot be just without being cruel. We want to be loyal, but if we are, we can't be truthful, and vice versa. We want to be free to live our life but find that we cannot do so except on the ruins of another's life. . . . To the extent that we resolve moral conflicts, one right or good is sacrificed to another."

HOOK'S UNDERSTANDING of the "agony of choice" is not purely cerebral or theoretical. This ceaselessly embattled controversialist has also been, in private, accessible and sympathetic to those facing difficult decisions. The late Adrienne Koch (who taught intellectual history at New York University) remembered Hook as "a magnet for the heartsick, the heartbroken, the troubled and the depressed. Students and colleagues, professional friends and friends of friends, came to his office, or ran after him in the street, or collared him at lunchtime, or followed him from class to office to seek his wisdom and to solicit his advice. He was always busy yet he always had time to hear them out. . . . One-time political enemies who had reviled him, colleagues who had fed on jealousy of him, even they, when in need, turned to him instinctively."

One suspects that this kind of reminiscence embarrasses Hook. His natural stance remains cheerfully, expectantly, determinedly combative. He would probably be uneasy if he found large numbers of intellectuals agreeing with him on many issues. At a sizeable gathering of friends and admirers in New York, to celebrate his 80th birthday, he remarked with some satisfaction that "It would be possible to fill a much larger hall with those who are not friends of Sidney Hook." Still, there seems to be a consensus emerging that Hook has been and remains a major and exemplary figure in American intellectual life: a natural democrat, a foe of every kind of tyranny, a partisan of rational and civilised discourse, a man of moral courage who has gone his own way, never courting approval or emulating fashion, a sceptical activist who believes in the incremental improvement of the human condition but rejects the temptation of fanaticism in virtue. We have not had many of his scope or calibre.

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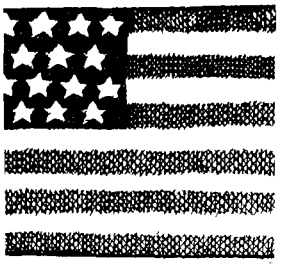
AMERICAN CHRONICLE

Of Presidents and their Splendours & Miseries

From F.D.R. to R.R.—By MAX LERNER



EVERY PRESIDENT of the United States has had in him a little of Job and a lot of Jehovah. Each has complained of the woes that go with his burdens, and each has acted like a god in issuing demands and wielding power.

The modern presidency began in 1933 with Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and he became the paradigm American leader of the 20th century. He sired a presidential line, established a style, and cast the longest shadow. Roosevelt was a titan, and he made the presidency so large that each of his successors has been a titan by virtue of office. But he was, like each of them, a wounded titan.

Why "titan"? I use the term not to confer on these modern presidents some unqualified grandeur (most were all too human), but to suggest that they came to be seen—and to see themselves—as more than mere men. Why "wounded"? Like all men, each was wounded by his life history, but presidents have their special wounds. With few exceptions, the passion that drove them toward their dream of high office left them scarred when they finally reached their lonely pinnacle. Once there, they often were savaged in the vise of their office by a culture which briefly celebrates "stars" but rarely honours heroes. A president's wounds come not just from his psyche but from the democracy he is called to lead.

But so, fortunately, do his strengths. American presidents are not mere victims, buffeted by the circumstances of their histories and experiences; they are active agents in the midst of life, coping and resilient. I see them not as segmented characters but as whole men, capable of growth: and to understand a whole man, an analyst must find in each man's character the clue which suggests a resolution of his personality's splits and contradictions, which lights up their relation to the whole. To seek the clue is to encounter, in Yeats's line, "the fascination of what's difficult." I want to seek that clue to the lives of each of the modern presidents who have left the stage of history, Franklin Roosevelt to Jimmy Carter, and in Ronald Reagan too.

THE MAN WHO WOULD become the paradigm President was a coddled only son, with a patrician lineage at Hyde Park and a posh education at Groton and Harvard which were scarcely the stuff of the "Log Cabin" myth. But he came to the White House in 1933 after surviving three crucial tests of his ability and character. For F.D.R., these were his service as Secretary of the Navy under Woodrow Wilson, his tenure as Governor of New York, and his personal struggle to overcome infantile paralysis.

It was the illness that prepared him best. Roosevelt had taken command of it and had learned how to take command of a people in panic. He taught them that strength (like "fear itself") can become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Crippled himself, he taught a nation crippled by fear how to walk. He demonstrated in ample measure what Machiavelli called *virtu*: courage, instinct, wiles, vision—the capacity for leadership.

He had preternatural antennae. A leftward wind was blowing across the world in his time and he rode it. He was permeable, soaking up impressions from everyone around him, translating them into slogans and actions. To counter his contemporaries, Mussolini and Hitler, he fashioned for himself a necessary image of strength. He sensed that history would overlook his critics' accusations that he was building a dictatorship, but that it would never forgive him weakness or passivity. He had much of the *shaman* in him; he governed by his magical knack for using the people's hunger for symbols and yearning for leadership.

The lapse of time, however, has opened chinks in the burnished armour of Roosevelt's reputation. The initial impact of his New Deal was mostly psychological; the economy never recovered from the Depression, but rather limped with the nation toward war. His domestic initiatives—the anti-business stance, the creation of the Welfare State—started a costly 50-year romance with the social engineeering of a new statism.

Roosevelt's reputation as war leader and peace organiser has suffered radical attritions. We now can see that he was slow to understand the nature of the menace of Hitler; and when he finally did, the aspect he grasped was less Hitler's evil than his propaganda skills. "I will meet the propaganda of the word by the propaganda of the deed", he told me in an interview at Hyde Park in which he played his usual role as enchanter. When he finally did enter World War II, it was not via Europe but via Pearl Harbor—an episode which he and his war leaders either botched badly or handled deviously. In

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any event, by 7 December 1941, a largely unassisted Europe had gone dangerously far toward disintegration.

He held the alliance together by playing the "coalition" theme earnestly and grandly, but he made costly mistakes in the War's execution. He turned a stony face to pleas to bomb the Nazi extermination camps because he feared that Hitler would use his propaganda machine to accuse him of waging a "Jewish War."[1] By demanding unconditional surrender, he hemmed in Hitler's foes in Germany and probably prolonged the conflict. He did not understand his ally Stalin or the nature of Soviet Communism. Toward the War's end, Roosevelt decided to check the eastern sweep of American armour, a move which had grievous political consequences. By Yalta, his stamina was exhausted and his judgment faulty.[2]

HOW DID THIS HAPPEN? Roosevelt operated within a frame of three major propositions. One was that Britain had to be aided and saved, but that the British Empire was an antiquated and dying system, to be replaced by Wilsonian self-determination. The second was that, to keep Stalin from suspecting a "deal", there could be no surrender terms for Germany that might have shortened the War and kept the Soviet armies from their final occupying drive through Eastern Europe. The third was that a friendly and satisfied Stalin was the indispensable element for a post-War United Nations world.

None of these propositions worked for him. Worst of all, he neglected the reality principle of military political decisions. When his military aide, Admiral Leahy, chided him about his Yalta concessions, he replied that Stalin's armies occupied the ground in Poland. Yet he allowed—even urged—them to drive to Berlin, thereby violating the first principle of geopolitics—possession of the turf.

His problem, in the end, was that he did too much too completely. In the process of managing the polity and waging the War, he created a political culture in his own image—a culture which lacked figures of stature to challenge him. No one was around to correct the faults in his world view. The intellectual and political culture which surrounded him (of which I must ruefully admit I was a part) shared his view of most things, including Communism. F.D.R. was a brilliant political practitioner, but neither his intellect nor his instincts enabled him to transcend the narrow culture he had created. And in his feeble final years he overstayed his time of effective leadership.

Franklin Roosevelt is still remembered as a titanic figure. But we now can see how flawed a giant he was.

ROOSEVELT'S SUCCESSOR forced Americans to reassess their thinking about the kind of preparation that makes a good president. Harry S. Truman never went to college, stayed close to his father's farm until he was 30, and failed as a haberdasher before finally turning to politics. It is often said that he was an ordinary man who made a good president—but that isn't true. Truman had a modest background, but he was an extraordinary man, a member of Thomas Jefferson's "natural aristocracy of virtue and talent."

Hewn out of a single bloc of Missouri turf, he got his strength from strong family ties. He came to office with a profound knowledge of history. He had been a near-sighted boy who ransacked his high-school library, taking to heart the fiery precepts of Plutarch's heroes and dreaming of becoming one. Still, his early life was a protracted moratorium as he waited for a destiny which never seemed to come. He did have one crucial experience as a leader, serving as captain of a National Guard artillery unit in France; he found that, by word and example, he could bend unruly men to his will. But his post-War years were feckless, and his early political career was lack-lustre. Finally, in 1934, after an overlong tenure as a county overseer, he was handed a Senate seat as a reward by "Boss" Pendergast of Kansas City, and the moratorium was over.

In his second term, Truman chaired a difficult Senate committee on war industry contracts, and in the process became fully his own man. The assignment gave him the prominence which propelled him on to the 1944 Democratic ticket as F.D.R.'s running mate. Eighty-two days after taking office as Vice-President, Truman found himself thrust into a chair that nearly everyone thought was too big for him.

He changed that view by compiling a record which can challenge that of any President of our time. He dropped the Bomb, ended the War, kept American troops in Europe, undertook the Berlin Airlift, established the Marshall Plan and NATO, recognised Israel, formed the Atomic Energy Commission, used the United Nations to halt an invasion of South Korea, and affirmed civilian control of the military by dismissing the recalcitrant General Douglas MacArthur. These actions were not without cost, but they undid F.D.R.'s faulty decisions where possible and laid the groundwork for an essential free-world coalition in the post-War era.

Truman governed against the odds, within a sheath of liberal contempt and McCarthyite savagery. He blundered. He never fully overcame the limitations and bruises of his early life, remaining stubbornly anti-intellectual, and often reducing complex decisions to black-and-white choices. He boasted that he had "never lost a night's sleep" over his decision to bomb Hiroshima; he should have. He was impatient with reflective thought.

Nevertheless, for the most part, Harry Truman managed the government well in his crucial era. His historical sense

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[1] See David S. Wyman, *The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust, 1941-1945* (Pantheon Books, 1984).

In his review in the *New York Times*, John Gross writes perceptively:

> "Roosevelt emerges from the book as having been—in this aspect of his presidency, at least—a curiously frivolous figure (though he took electoral considerations seriously enough). On the one occasion when he was persuaded to meet with a Jewish delegation to discuss the Holocaust, he 'immediately launched into a humorous story about his plans for post-war Germany' and spent 80 per cent of the time talking rather than listening . . . ."

[2] See Esmond Wright, "The Minotaur and the Maze", ENCOUNTER (December 1980).

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and his hard-earned mettle helped make him the most successful of the recent presidents, and the least wounded.

In 1952, the Republican Party turned to a war hero to lead it back to the White House after 20 years. The experience of Dwight David Eisenhower as President suggests that Americans might do well to look more often beyond the pool of politicians when seeking a candidate. "Ike" became America's foremost father-figure after George Washington. But his sunny, grinning, All-American image belied an underlying, studied artfulness. He was, in fact, among the wiliest of men.

Eisenhower's family had been left bankrupt by an unscrupulous business partner of his father's, and the experience left its mark. He grew up in an environment which stressed the importance of maintaining prestige and credibility, and the dangers of being deceived. As an Army officer, Eisenhower was promoted only slowly. He was best known for his staff work, which combined meticulous planning and personal diplomacy. But he showed great promise, at least to Chief-of-Staff George Marshall, who assigned him over several superiors to a position in War Plans, and eventually charged him with the military leadership of the pivotal European theatre.

That of course, was his great testing, and it came late in life and transformed him into a national hero. On D-Day, the White House became Ike's destiny.

He was a leader of useful contradictions. He seemed unambitious, yet he twice captured the presidency. He seemed above politics, yet his adversaries knew him as a subtle manoeuvrer and a master of indirection. Preoccupied with prestige and credibility, he hoarded his popularity, declining to spend it even for a just cause. The result was what one historian has called a "hidden-hand presidency." Behind a protective screen, Eisenhower called the plays, laid out the strategy, and enjoyed the gap between his seeming and actual roles in human events.

Eisenhower knew that on sticky matters a President can get more done by stealth than by show. He allowed Secretary of State John Foster Dulles to talk about "brinksmanship", but for eight years he avoided entangling the United States in a war. He used American weapons as covered cards in a poker game, cut defence costs for the sake of the economy without diminishing the country's international role, and achieved zero inflation. He was Odysseus, not Achilles, and he left behind a prosperous, secure nation.

Intellectuals, who made fun of his fractured syntax, finally have come to appreciate him. As early as 1967, Murray Kempton saw him as "a great tortoise carrying the world on his back."

"You liberal intellectuals don't think I have much of a brain", Eisenhower once said to me. "But there is the heart as well as the brain. I have been through the war and the cremation camps, and have learned not to forget the heart." In that self-assessment, as in many other things, Ike was right.

John Fitzgerald Kennedy is the only American president who must be discussed within the context of his family. The influence began, of course, with the founding father, Joseph P. Kennedy, who had a remarkably ambitious design for his four sons. He also had a profound impact on them; his example as a pirate in business, an appeaser in diplomacy, and a womaniser in a very public private life was a difficult one to ignore. He presided over a tightly controlled and controlling clan, programmed to produce at least one President.

Jack, the second son, became the vessel of his family's Presidential ambitions only upon the death of an older brother, Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. The family's ambitions were in one sense a prison for Jack, but in another sense they released in a sickly, confused boy his own incipient identity as a public man. He acted the role with flair. In the 1960 campaign, his brilliant personal style—shown to great advantage in the televised debates with Richard Nixon—helped Kennedy to overcome his youth, his inexperience, his Catholicism. His Presidency, too, had grace and class. He approached the office as a task to be studied and mastered; given time, he might have done both.

The substance of his Presidency, unfortunately, was no match for the style. In his inaugural address, Kennedy swore to "pay any price, bear any burden" for freedom. But he recoiled from confronting the Russians in Berlin, which was what they had counted on when they built their wall there. He botched the invasion of Cuba at the Bay of Pigs. In Laos and Viet Nam, he sought the appearance of action without the reality. His underlying thinking, centred on the idea of dynamism, caused a lot of trouble, because dynamism in a society whips up the accelerations of change and removes useful limits, making it difficult to achieve an equilibrium. It was no accident that the traumatic accelerations of the 1960s began in Kennedy's time, and soon included his own violent death.

Death and danger always fascinated Kennedy. He took risks, walked a tightrope over the abyss. He indulged in a *macho* duel with Castro. He also indulged in a licentiousness that was a by-product of his long competition with his father. His sexual exploits were strikingly stripped of emotions and even of eroticism; he seemed to bring to them the same zest for danger that he brought to some of his international exploits, the same urge to overfly into the realm of the forbidden.

Kennedy did succeed admirably in one great and grave episode of decision-making: the Cuban "Missile Crisis" of October 1962. By basing Russian missiles in Cuba, Nikita Khrushchev sought to present Kennedy with a provocative *fait accompli* and to dare him to undo it. Kennedy responded by warning that the United States would not shrink from using nuclear force to protect its interests, but he also created a middle course, throwing a blockade around the island and offering concessions to allow Khrushchev to save face. In this instance, Kennedy found the right mixture of toughness and caution.

With the Cuban "Missile Crisis", President Kennedy finally reached his full political adulthood. But he had little time to work in his full maturity. The bullets in Dallas put an end to

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his explorations, and seemed to threaten more than these.[3]

For most of his political life, John Kennedy's priority was his image; and it is his image that has lasted. He had a lot of affairs, but his greatest romance was with history. J.F.K. was a Byronic president: he sought to make an adventure out of his presidency and his life. His assassination was shattering to the nation's self-perception. We mourned not just for a murdered president but for a lost, romanticised vision of ourselves.

WHEN Lyndon Baines Johnson took the oath of office aboard "Air Force One" at Dallas's Love Field, he was the man best prepared to assume the Presidency since James Madison. He probably knew more about the inner workings of the government than anyone before or since. Charles de Gaulle described him as *un homme politique*, the incarnation of Aristotle's political man. He was brilliant, persuasive, ruthless and effective—yet in the Presidency, none of this could prevent his self-destruction.

An understanding of the rich contradictions of this truly imperial figure must begin in the Texas hill country of his boyhood. Lyndon Johnson was the son of a hard-driving, authoritarian father—a failed Texas politician—and a beautiful, cultured, possessive mother. His family suffered financial reversals which subjected them to the humiliation of a decline in status. As a youngster of developing talent, Johnson was caught in these cross-currents, and he seemed to spend the rest of his life seeking to redress old wounds by the ruthless acquisition and exercise of power.

Strong evidence supports this view. But some who have adopted it have gone too far, reducing Johnson to an evil caricature of greed, rapacity, betrayal and deceit. They strip him of his humanity and ignore essential facts: that he won the love of some extraordinary women and the loyalty of some wise men who worked for him, and that he used his power to institute social programmes of a scope unequalled since the New Deal.

My own belief is that the key to an understanding of Johnson's conflicting ends and means lies in his need for control. Doris Kearns, an historian who knew him well, says Johnson was constantly plagued by dreams of being bound to a chair, powerless to release himself. Clearly, the future President's early years were a chaos of volatilities that left him forlorn in a world he didn't create and couldn't control. He appears to have set himself at an early age to rebuild his world and to make it manageable. That meant choosing his father's profession. Politics brought Lyndon close to men of power, enabling him in part to control events and to manage his own life in what he saw as a harsh Darwinian jungle where only the crafty and strong survived. In time, he proved himself a brilliant technician, able to manage what others had botched. As Senate majority leader, he unleashed a cascade of legislation like a modern Hammurabi.

Unfortunately, Johnson had no philosophy to guide the technics. His world view was limited to "the lessons of Munich", his social outlook to the hand-me-down theories of Roosevelt. He had a need to "get things done", to "outdo" his idol, F.D.R., to achieve what the tyro Kennedy had failed at and become "the *can-do* President." But he had only a limited sense of what it was that he had to do.

There really were two Lyndon Johnsons, not "good" and "bad" but controlling and controlled. In the end, with the Viet Nam War, they became one and the same. The more Johnson felt controlled by forces beyond his reach, the more rigid he became in seeking to control them, detail by detail, helicopter by helicopter. He tried desperately to run the war from the White House, examining bombing reports each night in his bedroom. He had an Alamo conception of making a stand against the enemy to the bitter end: but he lacked the will either to win the war or to abandon it and call it a victory.

I recall him at the height of the Tet offensive, as we sat in the Oval Office with a bank of phone buttons before him. He would break into our talk to push a button, pick up the phone, listen briefly, then resume the thread of his urgency about convincing me that the Tet offensive had actually brought an American victory. That bank of buttons was his umbilical cord to a world which gave him definition and which he had to control.

Both the South-east Asian war and the "Great Society" fell victim to Johnson's excess and bravado. He sought to further simultaneously his war abroad and his reforms at home, finding money for both and borrowing more. Both ventures stoked the fiery furnace of social unrest, and unleashed forces beyond his control or understanding. As they slipped away from his grasp, he fell into a frozen inner panic of paranoia and despair.

L.B.J. had dreamed of becoming the architect of a golden American era, but he came to preside over this century's most traumatic and nearly suicidal decade. In the end, he came to know his nightmare of being strapped and unable to move. He gave up his election plans and died of heartbreak.

RICHARD NIXON calls to mind Massinger's Sir Giles Overreach. Throughout his life, he pushed himself beyond the set limits. His wounds, like Lyndon Johnson's, were inflicted within a family that bred insecurity, under a father who was harsh and ineffectual and a mother who, Nixon felt, favoured his invalid brothers over him. The political vocation, although not his early dream, became his acquired destiny. He studied it faithfully, and found the art of the adversary suited to the salving of his wounds.

What is striking about Nixon is his series of crises, transgressions and self-examinations, and his inexhaustible resilience. Even more than Kennedy, he explored the limits. He repeatedly found himself stretched to the breaking point—in the Hiss case, the Nixon Fund flap, the Caracas mêlée, Ike's health crisis, his own defeat for the California governorship, his bombing of Cambodia, and finally Watergate, where he went well beyond the limits.

He was always eager for testings, able to define himself

[3] See D. W. Brogan, "Death in Dallas", ENCOUNTER, December 1964. See also Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr, "Can the System Be Saved? The Short Happy Life of American Political Parties", ENCOUNTER, January 1983.

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only in action, often destructive and self-destructive. He saw life in the purest life-and-death terms of Social Darwinism. He acted as an agent in the free-market moral jungle, and on the occasion of his California defeat, he told reporters, "You fellows are killers, but I believe in your right to kill." More often, his rhetoric was touched by idealism, but his actions usually alternated between the ferocious and the masochistic.

Nixon knew geopolitics better than Johnson, and he probably would not have originally escalated the Viet Nam War which he took so long to wind down. He had undeniable talents, and he formed a first-rate odd-couple partnership with Henry Kissinger in which each man used the other. It is true that he dangerously expanded executive power, moving toward what Arthur Schlesinger called an "imperial presidency", but he ran the imperium with a keen sense of the power principle. Nixon based his political strength on the non-intellectual classes. A man of many resentments, he complemented the resentment of a working man's "silent majority" with outrage at the excesses of a radical-liberal academic and media élite.

Unfortunately, his own resentments projected Nixon into acts so blatantly illegal that they cut him away from his natural support system. He never trusted the course of events and always felt compelled to give history an extra push. He manoeuvred, at Watergate, to steal an election he was almost certain to win anyway; in the process, he stole the presidency from himself. The night before he resigned, he kneeled in prayer with Kissinger. It is not clear to what God the two men prayed, but they had in common the god of history, and Nixon could be expected not to lose his chance to put in his bid.

As it turned out, those who thought he was finished that night had forgotten his Lazarus-like power of resilience. The last decade has witnessed, in and out of the academies, a largely unpredicted Nixon revisionism. Some of it is a kind of revanchism by liberals against his three successors, a way of making them look bad by making Nixon look good. But most of it is based on a recognition of his strengths as a leader and of his successes as an architect of foreign policy. It is almost as if his resignation from the post he loved above all else had plunged Nixon into a hell so fiery that it made all his previous wounds seem minor, and burned them all away.

I talked with Nixon one night in the White House when he wooed me as a political opponent whose "fairness" he appreciated, and defended me against a public attack by his Vice-President, Spiro Agnew. We have talked more frequently and more personally since he became author, commentator, Presidential adviser, perhaps the first President to preside over his own revisionist rehabilitation in history. His case suggests that wounds incurred during the life journey and Presidential tenure are not beyond all healing.

His successor was a minor figure. In October 1973, when Vice-President Spiro Agnew resigned in disgrace, an already weakened President Nixon was forced to choose the inoffensive House minority leader, Gerald R. Ford, as the new Vice-President—one most likely to succeed. The nominee modestly quipped that he was "a Ford, not a Lincoln", and he was right.

When he finally succeeded Nixon ten months later, Ford was convincing at first in his role as national "healer." But he stumbled one month into his term when he pardoned his predecessor. Ford explained that a Nixon criminal trial and probable jail term would further divide the society; and his reasoning was sound. But he should have known that trust was as important as compassion in his effort to heal the nation. In many minds, the pardon broke the trust which Ford had begun to build, and raised the question of his own presidential bona fides.

Ford also had to pay for two events that he had little role in bringing about: the final liquidation of the American role in Viet Nam and the quadrupling of oil prices by Opec. He contributed to his own growing image as a bumbler by stumbing physically in incidents reported mercilessly by the media, and by stumbling verbally on the issue of Polish freedom in his 1976 debate with Jimmy Carter.

As President, Ford lacked *gravitas*, a certain weightiness. He remains in memory what he was: an interim figure. Early in his life, he had been separated from his natural father; he had lost a figure of authority, and he seemed less than fully able to project authority in later life. During a long spell as a Congressional leader, he essentially got along with his peers and did nothing to excess. Because of a remarkable sequence of events, this experience carried him to the Presidency—but not to an important use of it.

"Good man, wrong job." That was Speaker Sam Rayburn's summation of Eisenhower. It really didn't fit Ike, but it sums up Jimmy Carter.

Carter was a man of obvious intelligence, ability and religious belief who accurately gauged the post-Viet Nam and post-Watergate climate in America, and won his nomination and election as an independent and virtuous political outsider. For all his strengths, however, it should be remembered that he defeated the hapless Gerald Ford in 1976 only narrowly—and against the skilful Ronald Reagan in 1980, he was overwhelmed. He came in by a whisper and went out by a landslide.

Carter failed as President because, like Ford, he never figured out how to exercise authority. He seemed more interested in examining his conscience, in ensuring his own worthiness before God, and in attaining a pristine kind of excellence ("Why not the best?") than in exercising power.

This surely was a legacy of his early life in a family oriented toward good works (a sister became a faith healer) and he learned early on to be dutiful. When his father died, he abandoned his career as a naval engineer to return to Plains and take over the family business. But he stayed ambitious. When he lost a race for governor of Georgia in 1966, he experienced something very like a breakdown; it was resolved with his "rebirth" as a true Christian. He was also obsessed with being a "positive activist" President. During an evening at the White House, as he talked of his Georgia boyhood days with the black boy who played a "brother" role, I sensed that he had an eye on psycho-history.

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Carter was infatuated with facts. As President, he stayed up nights with his briefing books; he marshalled details, absorbed them, ate them, expected them to sway the Congress and the people.

He had no coherent foreign policy. His top aides in that realm were at loggerheads with each other, and he lacked the commanding instinct to whip them into line. His favourite theme, human rights, fell prey to the Soviet contempt for them. His prim and proper State Department undercut allied régimes in Iran and Nicaragua. In the end, his vacillation left America naked to its enemies. His innocence was shocked by the Soviets' contemptuous move into Afghanistan, and his re-election was doomed by the Ayatollah's protracted and humiliating abuse of the hostages.[4]

Carter was at his best at Camp David, sweating out details and acting as mediator between Begin and Sadat. Those activities were his fortes. Otherwise, he moved too fast, too early, with too little direction and too many projects tumbling into one another. Overall, he lacked a strong philosophy of government, and he surrendered his authority to his crises of conscience. He had a passion for excellence, but his "best" was not good enough because it was largely irrelevant to the demands of governing.

In January 1981, when Jimmy Carter and his Georgians left the White House in desolation, Ronald Reagan and his Californians entered it in triumph, bruiting a "revolution" by one of the unlikeliest revolutionaries in history.

Ronald Reagan's small-town Illinois boyhood was Arcadian in a Mark Twain way but it had its rough edges. Only with Truman has there been such a disproportion between a President's earlier life and his mature performance in office. His inner security survived an alcoholic father, straitened family resources, and the hazards of a somewhat less than starring film career.

The testing experience came in the 1940s when Reagan, then head of the Screen Actors Guild, met a Stalinist attempt to take over the union and learned that it could be resisted. It turned him from an F.D.R. liberal loyalist into a hard-bitten foe of Communism, whose opposition struck close to the bone. His odyssey as a General Electric speechmaker on the chicken circuit refreshed his insight into blue-collar lives and values. It also prepared him for his spirited and acclaimed TV speech in the 1964 Goldwater campaign and—spurred on by a junta of wealthy California conservatives—for a try at the Governorship.

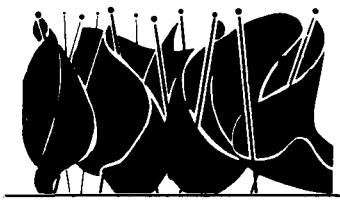
The response of his Hollywood friends was characteristic. "Not Ronald Reagan for Governor", said Jack Warner, the acrid studio head. "Jimmy Stewart for Governor, and Ronald Reagan for Best Friend." It bespoke the shadowy line between make-believe and reality which ran through Reagan's career and gave it a lightness of being to balance his political tough-mindedness. While using consummately all the arts of communication, Reagan has succeeded by always returning to the reality principle.

He was a pragmatic success as two-term Governor of California. His start as a national candidate came late, yet even his failed bids for the Presidential nomination in 1968 and 1976 carried excitement. When he finally made it in 1980, he had been through a long testing-period that tried his grit and soul, and one just had to take him seriously as a strong leader.

He is the first President since Franklin Roosevelt to have "Revolution" authentically attached to his name, for he marks a watershed for the deep currents of American tendency. Historians are bound to see him as a Jungian mirror image of Roosevelt. He has set himself to undoing a half-century of state supports and entitlements, and to opening America—and through it the world—to an expansive free-market economy. He will not be spared by history for leaving American troops exposed to massacre in Lebanon, nor for piling up an unparalleled deficit while preaching a balanced budget. Yet a restored economy and an enhanced American world position created the climate of national confidence which won him a second term by a Himalayan electoral majority.

His optimism, his capacity to relate and communicate, his sensory organic feel for the popular mind—these have been Rooseveltian means that Reagan has turned to anti-Rooseveltian ends. But the same imaginative flair is there for carrying off contradictory messages, as in Reagan's heavy Keynesian deficit-spending within a frame of anti-Keynesian

[4] See Elie Kedourie, "Disastrous Years", Encounter, November 1984.



CUBA
AS A MODEL
AND A
CHALLENGE
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The Cuban American National Foundation 11

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"supply-side" economics, and in a high-tech "Star Wars" weaponry research joined to a promise to use it for reducing, in the end abolishing, offensive weapons systems.

This is a more complex personality and mind than Reagan is generally credited with. He fits in with a high-tech information revolution but has baffled the nation's political high culture. America's most effective President since Truman and Eisenhower has never been taken seriously by an intellectual and media élite which regards him as indolent, insensitive, slow-witted, and a Doonesbury cartoon figure of fun and grotesquerie.

Reagan may, of course, somewhere in his second term, tumble off the high-wire of Presidential politics and have a great fall. Despite his remarkable survival capacity I don't rule it out. But if it happens it will be because—while shaping a climate of popular confidence—he has thus far (unlike Roosevelt) failed to build a protective intellectual counter-culture that will reach the media and the academics.

Yet I must stop short of an assessment of Reagan because history is not yet through with him. This actor is still on the stage; his actions are too close to yield the luxury of perspective. The moment, for him, is too filled with alarums and excursions and the noise of continuing battle in which presidents are tested.

THE SAME, IN A SENSE, is true of his predecessors: Does history ever let go of them? I doubt it. With every new event of any magnitude, their decisions are seen through a new prism, their minds and characters are put to a new scrutiny. That is what is meant by "revisionist history", and I confess myself a revisionist. I relish both the excitement and the difficulty of watching these Presidential portraits emerge and re-emerge from the collective study of scholars. I am even willing to incur the pain which this process often brings.

I have felt this pain because, having known each of these men and on occasion having been part of the battles surrounding them, I have also known pleasure in seeing some of their individual reputations repaired or heightened, but pain as well at having to eat some of the words of praise or contumely I sent their way in the past.

How, then, can I be sure that my new estimates of these men are better? I can't. But I do have the comfort of additional perspective. More time has passed, some of the archives have been opened; we know more about these Presidents and the results of their work. Also, I am older, and more rueful in experience.

I don't care much for the usual typologies by which historians rank Presidents as great or near-great, strong or weak, active or passive. I prefer to ask an operational question: to what extent has a given President truly used his power to make America governable, to allow the organic forces of the nation to flourish, and to make life better, or at least more tolerable, for its people?

In the end, Franklin Roosevelt is the paradigm President simply because he did all that amply and grandly—although, in his later years, at great cost to his ultimate legacy. Truman and Eisenhower did all that, too, and their years (1945-1961) are remembered nostalgically as a halcyon period when society seemed in equilibrium, its parts in relative balance. That is why newer evaluations of Truman and Eisenhower, including my own, are upbeat. In their time America was governable, and they governed.

Kennedy and Johnson were men of talent; but their policies, especially in Viet Nam, let loose forces and accelerations and dynamisms of change which made it hard for them and their successors to govern. Nixon tried hard to set limits on this unwieldy society but ended up breaking the limits himself. Ford and Carter floundered out of their depth. Reagan, after he lays down his burden, will be judged in the long perspective by how effectively he has slowed the thrust of unbridled change—and whether he leaves the country more governable than those who preceded him.

ANYONE who has done his duty as a President-watcher in this time of storms and tempests has his own long and short lists of the leadership qualities that are crucial. It is clear from the experiences of the varied cast of characters who have presided over the past half-century that the modern Presidency requires a remarkable range of abilities and potentials. An effective modern President must be able to learn from experience and change with it. He must be at home with his innermost self, must be able to come to terms with his own wounds and scars and limits—and not wreak them on the nation. He must be able to make decisions with reflection but also with resolution, and to convey, at all times, a quality of quiet command. He must be able to interact with the moods of the common people, and to transmit to them a coherent philosophy of change, continuity and direction. He must earn and keep their trust about his character and good faith. He must be aware but unpanicked by the dangers in a world of ultimate weaponry. Above all else, he must recognise the wounds we Americans have inflicted on our civilisation, and he must work to help release our best creative energies.

That is quite an order, but I remain a possibilist: about the Presidency, and about America.

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NOTES & TOPICS

Draining Fleet Ditch

Hope for the Press?—By EDWARD PEARCE

IF WE SEEM to have been here before, I apologise; but something is happening at the margin of newspaper publishing which meets the suggestions made in ENCOUNTER in the past.[1] If it should succeed, the implications for conventional established newspaper production will be beyond reckoning.

I have argued before that Fleet Street, dragged down as it is with grotesque wage bills and a degree of overmanning which would have done credit to the abbey lubbers[2] of pre-Reformation English monasteries, survives only because the ordinary laws of rational profit-seeking are abrogated. They are broken by the delusions and vanities of men who, having made their real money doing something else, are prepared to donate large parts of it to the print unions in return for the doubtful respectability conferred by membership of the House of Lords.

Accordingly, nothing very much changes. Either we stay with old-style technology and print morning papers on presses built in 1912 and held together with stamp edging; or, what is worse, we go over to the new system but, in trembling fear of the unions, permit control of the "key stroke" to remain with printers (and their hangers-on). Thus to capital costs are added running costs; new plants are opened, brave talk goes around, and at the end of the dawn the same blackmailers exercise the same power at the same price. I have stated with some bitterness that the reform of Fleet Street is preconditional upon the dissolution of Fleet Street. London, with its semi-criminal system of union enforcement, is not the place to print a newspaper; the future lies in Northampton, Reading, and beyond, and in a complete break with the nexus of the NGA (skilled linotypers), NATSOPA (clerical staff), and—worst of all—SOGAT 82 (the union of dispatch workers, messengers and machine-minders), of whom all London distributors live in blind terror that all their other non-newspaper business will be blacked.

It has been possible during a London strike to produce on old machines in Manchester three times that city's normal Northern edition print run and distribute it as far south as Bristol, but for not one copy to be sold in London!

All capital cities are instinctively corrupt, and the tradition which produces the meat-porters of Smithfield, the printers of Fleet Street, the employees of London Docks, and the City of London Police is a good tradition to take a train from.

Certainly things have grown no better since I last wrote on this topic. In September of 1984 one newspaper paid over the first ever £1,000 cheque for a week's work to a linotype printer—the £50,000-a-year folk-craftsman had arrived. . . . Meanwhile the debts of newspaper companies, some of them incurred for the purpose of actually buying out their resident Norsemen, had become frightening. Bankruptcy was no longer just a scare-word. At the same time papers had chased one another downhill and down-market, stumbling from an advertising bracket they understood to one they did not in the desperate hope of propping circulation. The quality of the entire British national press is in sustained and secular decline; misprints appear like confetti; foreign coverage (to the extent that it exists) is increasingly taken off the agencies; as for written English, it accommodates itself downwards. There is a new sort of man owning newspapers; one looks from Rowland to Maxwell, from Maxwell to Rowland and back again—and says nothing. They are what is happening to us.

INEVITABLY THEN, I respond with real enthusiasm to the news coming out of Lancashire. The one man with the iconoclastic qualities to attempt the reformation of the English press, Mr Eddie Shah, proposes—very seriously, with fully costed plans—to do so in much the way which I have advocated here in the past. It will be recalled that Mr Shah, the producer of a highly successful free-sheet group, a year or so ago fought a battle to the death with the NGA militants, and won. Even though he operates in the North, where union power has never been as dire as in London, Mr Shah attracted the national attention of the union in scenes of picket-line violence worthy if not of the Wobblies, then of the Kent Coalfield. At one time he was besieged in his works with only

[1] See my ENCOUNTER columns, "Fleet Street, with Tears" (September-October 1984) and "Unfreedom of the Press" (December 1982).

[2] According to A. G. Dickens, *The Reformation in England* (1967), the average ratio of in- and outdoor servants and other hangers-on in an early-16th-century English abbey was eight men to every monk.

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a door and its bolts between him and the mob. He was saved by riot-police sent from Manchester, apparently at the direct invitation of the Home Secretary. No matter, he won; and with a union-free shop and large but rational ambitions, is placed to become the most exciting influence on the newspaper world since the War. Mr Shah's ideas were examined in some detail by a very impressed (London) *Financial Times*, which takes them extremely seriously. He has raised the risk capital he needs in the City, and it is simply one of life's little ironies that an important part of Mr Shah's new capital will come from the Hungarian National Bank, run in the City of London on exclusively capitalist lines. They think him a good risk. He plans an operation which will transform the free-sheets under his *Messenger* imprint into something more—a national newspaper provisionally priced at 17p. It will be aimed at the middle of the market, the *Daily Mail-Daily Express* level, politically somewhere between the Tories and the SDP, and will have a non-journalist staff of only 500. That is 8% of the manning bill at the *Daily Express*, which, apart from its journalists, employs 6,000 men.

Mr Shah will print in Warrington, otherwise famous for by-elections and English vodka, and will reproduce copies nationwide by satellite printing. Of his staff, 300 will be van drivers specifically employed to get round the grip of SOGAT 82 by direct delivery. Whether Eddie Shah's plans are correct in their details we shall all have to see, but there is every reason to take the operation with the same deadly earnestness as the NGA took his breach with the union. If the Shah paper works (and he is aiming at present for a circulation of 1.2 to 1.4 million) then the implications for Fleet Street are revolutionary.

The real union blackmail card so far has not been the power of the printers half so much as that of SOGAT through the terrified wholesalers. Even the sweet device of collecting pay for working while production is stopped by a handful of electricians is less important than a grip on delivery, which has given the unions power to hire, power to dismiss, power to close—power, candidly, to steal big.

LET US SUPPOSE that Mr Shah, nobody's fool, has got his figures right, that he and his plant survive the physical violence it will be offered (one trusts that he is heavily insured). What motive will there be for the Fleet Street managers not to follow him on the broad highway that leads out of London into rationality? If the costs of a paper were less, if production and delivery were guaranteed, if for example the demand of triple time did not make it cheaper simply to forgo printing at certain holiday times, if papers were decently printed without the loss-inducing rain of deliberate, correction-clause mistakes, then the balance of income between circulation and advertising would shift. We would operate with a far lower break-even point. The notion that one must eternally "go down-market" to stay in the margins of containable loss would disappear. (Though the thought crosses my mind that down-market is the natural habitat of far too many journalists and managements who seem possessed of an ever-falling threshold of self-respect.) However, if the constraints were off and we had escaped from our national carbuncle to print in Worcester or Derby, if we had escaped from that adjunct of coercion, the timetable of British Rail, and were functioning with a well-marshalled fleet of van drivers, we should be in a different world.

Firstly, it would become the expectation of a newspaper-owner to make a profit from his product. Secondly, there would be diversity, including the political diversity which after much exposure to the *Pravda* Toryism of certain nationals, would be welcome. It is also just possible that if grotesque sums of money were not earmarked to pay men with the utility of under-butlers for hereditary non-services, we might spend some of it on proper journalism. Foreign coverage might come back, features could be drawn from outside the dull ring of tired habituals who fill space because no one can give time to look for new talent. With luck, the debilitating effect of the National Union of Journalists and its closed shop could be amended. Above all, we might get genuine competition, not the present conspiracy of inadequacy.

One looks in despair at things done badly, and wishes they were done well. For the present set-up constitutes its own cannibalistic spiral of deterioration. Because the unions are ferocious and destructive, no intelligent man wants to enter newspaper management in the capital; because the management is wretched, the unions make demands which surprise themselves, *und so weiter*. Today's national press floats on logs of complacency lashed together by despair. From this combination comes the indifference of so much work actually done by journalists. If you are accustomed to being misprinted, when twenty-five years ago misprints were thought shocking (as were mistakes in grammar), what motive is there for trying to get anything right? If, as Editor, great tracts of your time are taken up in the ungodly company of morlocks from the shop floor demanding and threatening in the militant accents of East London, how willing are you to step back five paces from your paper and consider its own faults and the opportunities for improvement?

The question is not, "Are we doing work properly?", but, "Can we get through the night?" Not, "Are we a decent newspaper?", but, "Can we put on a preposterously high circulation to afford our preposterously large retinue of superfluous men on higher professional incomes for unskilled labour?" No one would make zip-fasteners the way we make newspapers.

No other industry—though the motor factories came near it as did the docks—operates in the same spirit of idle-minded self-contempt. We know for a certainty that our newspapers are deteriorating, falling into carnivorous ownership, growing in public disesteem, because at the root of what we call our industry is a demand made with menaces that twelve men shall be paid at celestial rates for what might properly be done by one. We have indeed no right to criticise the considerable inefficiencies of other trades. A newspaper in this context is not just a sinner with a stone, it is manslaughter growing sniffy about illegal parking. But we criticise freely precisely because Fleet Street is conditioned by the terrible unions it knows, the humiliating "industry" in which it operates.

Ironically, of course, the entire business of printing

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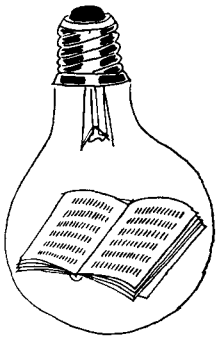
Kultura's Achievement



Zurich

THERE IS, *alas, only one exception to the general rule about magazines and journals which are produced by exiles and émigrés in the West; for they are almost all invariably inward-looking, self-indulgent, fractious, cut off from a far-away homeland. The one great exception is the famous Polish review, "Kultura", edited in Maisons-Laffitte just outside Paris throughout the post-War period, and with the most astonishing success, both among its readers in the West and in the "cultural underground" of Communist Poland.*

It is not easy to explain when one realises that its leading spirit, Jerzy Giedroyc, came from a Lithuanian aristocratic background, and Russian remains his only other language for conversation. More than that, he was no popular figure in the first waves of refugees from Poland to the West, for he was very far from being a strong nationalist in the old sense, and indeed in his old pre-War magazine "Polytika" he had shown his international spirit. It was something of the same atmosphere which prevailed in the pages of his "Kultura", and over the years it was here that the writing of such "cosmopolitans" (subsequently to enjoy world fame) as Czeslaw Milosz and Witold Gombrowicz appeared. One should, I suppose, always be sceptical when so-called "insiders" call others "outsiders." And indeed I can remember the excitement in Paris when both insiders and outsiders seemed to merge: manuscripts began to come out of Warsaw, even from leading Communist writers and Marxist thinkers, which began to indicate that there might be a common spirit when all began to abandon (or even to "revise") the dictates of received ideas. Suddenly it was no longer an "émigré" journal. When the first period of so-called "Thaw" came there was a bridge available between in-landers and out-landers. Even noms de plume were abandoned, as in the case of Stefan Kisielewski, the gifted Warsaw Catholic writer, about whom I have written before (see ENCOUNTER, *December 1983).*

I remember that euphoric moment in the autumn of 1956 when Gomulka came out of the shadows to become Party Secretary; and "Kultura" joined the enthusiasm. Support also came at the time from Jan Novak, the first director of the Polish section of Radio Free Europe in Munich. . . . How long ago all this is! Today RFE and Radio Liberty, both in the same building in Munich's "Englische Garten", are the main target of Party propagandists in Warsaw; the present director of the Polish section, Zdzislaw Najder, has even been sentenced to death *in absentia*. And the Germans in Munich, once so pleased by hopeful Ostpolitik news from the East, now grumble about the "problematical propaganda" coming out of Bavarian broadcasting houses to "the Iron Curtain satellites." Certain truths, and indeed even plain news bulletins, can have a "subversive" effect inside the Soviet Empire nowadays; and this runs against the German nostalgia for "détente" and its fetish of "relaxing tensions." Without tensing a few muscles a human being can't even manage to stand upright.

I wonder whether this hasn't something to do with the strange fact that when Jan Novak's recent book was published—a fascinating Polish story of the wartime connections between the Warsaw underground and the Allies in London (for whom Novak was an intrepid courier)—it was widely praised in America and England, and was immediately translated into French and other languages; but no German publisher was interested. Nor is Zdzislaw Najder at all known among German writers and critics, although his several literary studies of Joseph Conrad have won him an international reputation. A curious place, this Munich: home of illusions, myopia, self-imposed blinkers.

I BRING **the Germans into the matter because "Kultura" has to its credit several important attempts to bridge the grievous misunderstandings which have made a barbaric battleground of Eastern European cultural conflicts. The Poles have tried to build bridges not merely among themselves, but with special numbers in Russian and Czech, and a programme of publishing leading Eastern European writers and poets. Once again, I suspect that this was not the easy and popular path. I know how pleased Poles are when they are seen and taken to be "Westerners", for only a "geographical accident" consigned them to the East; so why trouble oneself with the sticky problems of strange, far-away Slavs and other neighbours?**

STILL, *the Germans are on the frontier, and in the latest special issue of "Kultura" Adam Micknik takes up the borderlines of Silesia and other controversial issues. For unreasonableness in the West on such matters can only tie Polish interests to the Russians, and in this case surely maintain such "tensions" as to make a future German reunification even more unlikely. In the Bonn republic there are still active "émigrés" and "refugees" from areas that are now Poland (and, in the case of East Prussia, part of the USSR). What bridges are they trying to build? As Najder writes in "Kultura":*

> **"The coexistence of peoples who have long suffered at each other's hands can scarcely be served by the repetition of hoary old legalistic formulas, and their endless repetition in German or in Polish. What is deeply necessary is the awareness that such neighbours are bound not only by frontiers but by a common destiny. . . ."**

This note comes through very strongly in the Polish writings, as if the signs of this new awareness were more keenly present among the Poles than among the Germans. Adam Michnik, an historian with political imagination, proposes that the Polish government, at long last, publish a documentary white paper on the thorny issue of the "expulsion of the Germans" (the "ethnic" farmers, workers, professionals who were summarily driven out after the War was over). He understands what this means, and only asks in return that understanding Germans would not be so concerned with the feelings of official Poland, the régime of General Jaruzelski, to whom so many in the West wish a stable and orderly future since the instability and disorder promised by a "Solidarity" resurgence might be just too upsetting. . . .

All in all, one can only wish that "Kultura" has the impact in Central Europe that it has enjoyed in Eastern Europe, where it has been a consistent creative force in culture and politics. We have much to learn from the Poles.

François Bondy

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news on recycled Swedish trees may be on the edge of obsolescence. The evolving concept of folding-screen TV—which would allow the citizen to bill himself at the touch of a switch while sitting in his railway carriage to, well, to column 6 on the back page of the *Telegraph*, I hope, and to read it off a screen capable of folding neatly into a briefcase—is not something I have heard discussed in Fleet Street. One goes to the Department of Trade for advanced thinking like that, but the idea is there, seriously researched and lurking some way behind Mr Eddie Shah. The sort of printing Fleet Street hasn't got, or for which it pays ransom to its handloom weavers, is not new; it is the *interim* technology.

But given Central London's gravy-brown zest for innovation, there is plenty of time for Mr Shah to make a profit and even a revolution before such excesses of novelty are contemplated. Incidentally, with TV video-mixers now being paid upwards of £80,000 a year, and with studio overmanning at roughly a factor of three, while producers insist on outdoor work "because we are under budget", who shall say what inventions will not yet be garlanded with ruinous costs?

WHAT MATTERS here and now is that the first real effort to produce a national newspaper on lines which follow the ordinary principles of business costs, and which defy the criminality to which we have long habituated ourselves, is under way. Mr Shah, the (politely put) object of racial enmity from unions in the old guild tradition of stoning Flemish weavers, has brought his courage and his considerable gift of cutting through established rights of extortion to an industry which normally devours its entrepreneurs. Precisely because he actually broke a union at his plant, because he invoked legal rights of which the famous names are afraid, I have the intuitive feeling that Mr Shah, with his Northern base, his van men, his keen response to such American excesses as colour-printing (which will be a formidable booster to his rocket), really will get off the ground. We may well see some physical viciousness. This battle against the Palermo privileges which give us our Sicilian newspapers will be a savage one, in and out of the courts. But ultimately it must follow the pattern which occurred in another industry.

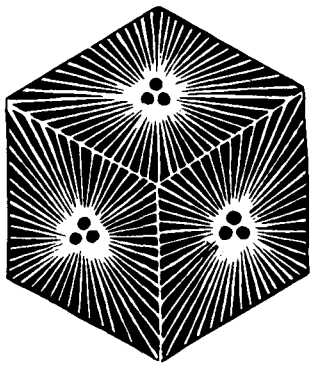
England, in the 17th and early- to mid-18th centuries, used to weave around the clock. Cloth was produced in Kent and Westmorland (Kendal green), East Anglia, Gloucestershire, even the North Riding of Yorkshire. When John Kay invented the modern world with his flying shuttle, it took thirty years, even in those non-unionised days, for it to be established. The handloom weavers of Frome in Somerset rioted, the weavers of Colchester came within an ace of lynching Kay, but the shuttle *was* used, *and* the jenny, the mule, and the power loom after it; but not in Somerset, not in Colchester! Lancashire had 180 years of textile production out of its combination of good geography and acceptance of the inevitable. Mr Eddie Shah, also in Lancashire, is planning today what London will never do tomorrow or at any time. Accordingly, the future of newspaper-production lies outside London and outside the unions.

It is a time for setting aside metropolitan delusions.

Paris Notebook

By Jean-François Revel

Stars & Arms



IN THE FIELD of defence, two great topics head the agenda in the United States and Western Europe: *la guerre des étoiles*, the so-called "star wars"; and Arms Control, with the resumption of Soviet-American talks in Geneva and Vienna. What obscures both these themes is that each of them goes by a name which suggests precisely the opposite of what it represents—in star wars there is no war, and in arms control there is no control. The "Star Wars" programme, whose official name is the "Strategic Defence Initiative" (SDI), is intended as a purely defensive system, as the name implies. The Reagan pronouncement of 23 March 1983, which his opponents derisively christened the "star wars speech", in fact refers to a system for *intercepting* Soviet missiles. If that system could be made sufficiently difficult to penetrate, it would provide the United States and Western Europe with a protective umbrella against nuclear attack.

What strategic innovation does this project introduce? At present, and ever since the start of the nuclear age, security depends upon deterrence, the shared certainty of retaliation. The prospect of inevitably suffering "unacceptable damage" in their turn is supposed to prevent the two potential adversaries from resorting to nuclear warfare. In this conception it is each side's ability to strike back which prevents the other from using its own strength.

In the conceptual framework of strategic defence, on the other hand, the barrier would no longer be simply moral and psychological, but would also be a physical reality. Thus Reagan talked in his speech about "a future in which we would be able to counter the threat of Soviet nuclear attacks by defensive means"—instead of depending on "the threat of instant American retaliation to deter the Soviets from attacking." Then came the decisive remark: "These defensive measures would make nuclear weapons inadequate and obsolete." In this way, Reagan continued, the USA, in order to preserve its security, could rise above the sad necessity of being compelled "to deal with other nations and other human beings by threatening their very existence."

On top of that, during the last presidential campaign, in the course of his second televised debate with Walter Mondale, Reagan envisaged sharing the technology of strategic defence with the USSR. Then some day it might become possible to replace the old MAD doctrine of deterrence based upon "mutual assured destruction" with another, much more

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civilised doctrine based on the reciprocal invulnerability of the potential belligerents.

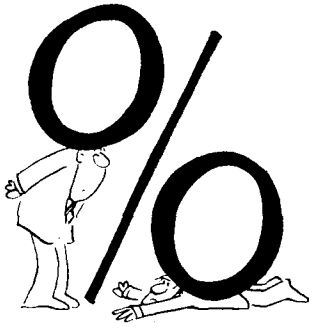
The Strategic Defence Initiative met with the coolest possible welcome in Western Europe. Some Governments and many defence analysts condemned it as an irresponsible pipe-dream. Its immediate effect, they argued, could only undermine confidence in the unshakeable character of deterrence at the very moment when the NATO countries were emerging from a long and painful political ordeal of persuading their own publics to accept the deployment of Euromissiles. Was this a time to be opening a new strategic debate?

THE EUROPEANS advanced a number of weighty objections. The SDI programme, they said, will only be completed (if it ever is completed) in twenty years' time. In the meantime there is a risk of creating illusions which will weaken our defence efforts. The 26 billion dollars it will cost initially, from now until 1988 or 1990, could be better spent on other weapons systems.[1] Furthermore, though strategic defence is perhaps conceivable for the United States, its efficacy for Europe merits the utmost scepticism. The fact is that Soviet medium-range missiles (and there are many other varieties than the *SS-20*) have only a short trajectory before hitting their West European targets; the decreased time-span for interception makes strategic defence a high risk for the Europeans. And what becomes of the French and British strike forces in this new context? If, as predicted, the Soviets developed an anti-ballistic system as impenetrable as the American version, the French *force de frappe* would be unusable. In this hypothesis, they would have to say goodbye to their "independent deterrent" (even though all parties in France at least are passionately in favour of retaining it).

It might be said that the United States and its assembled allies cannot freeze their defence systems indefinitely for the

[1] This is, of course, a relatively modest sum compared with the *annual* cost of NATO to the American taxpayer: varying between 120 and 130 billion dollars.

French Ideology:



LARGE-SCALE SHIFTS *are occurring in the bedrock of French opinion. A Sofres-"Le Point" investigation (carried out between 15-20 February 1985), using a nation-wide example of 1,000 men and women aged 18 or more, shows a number of surprising changes in French ideological assumptions.*

The first point to note is that ideological scattering is more marked on the Right, among the liberals (19%), the moderates (17%) and the Gaullists (13%), than on the Left. Socialism, in spite of the difficulties it is having to contend with as a result of the resurgence of Right-wing ideologies, remains the most solidly based ideology, with 25%. The general shift from Left to Right has stopped short at the "conservateurs", whose support stands at only 4%.

Ideological Preferences

Which ideological trend is the closest to your own ideas?

	%
Conservative	4
Moderate	17
Liberal	19
Gaullist	13
Social Democrat	7
Socialist	25
Communist	5
Revolutionary	2
No opinion	8

The second point to note is a significant and large-scale reclassificaton of French politicians, both in the majority and in the Opposition, in accordance with the ideological trends.

In the majority, François Mitterrand's solid support among the Left, with 53% in favour, shows that in spite of the departure of his Communist Ministers and the hammering of the CP, he is still reaping the rewards of his policy of the "union de la gauche." But despite his efforts to be seen as the "Président de tous les Français", he gets only 10% of the support of moderates, whereas Laurent Fabius has 21%, Michel Rocard 18%, and Jacques Delors only 8%. The Prime Minister therefore has a much broader appeal than the head of state.

ON THE LEFT, *Michel Rocard is hard on the President's heels, with 50% of socialists in favour. Among "sociaux-démocrates" he is far ahead of Mitterrand (44% as opposed to 18%), which should prove to be a considerable handicap for the head of state's policy of an opening to the centre.*

In the Opposition, the phenomenal rise of Raymond Barre has thrown the whole scene into disarray. With 45% in favour, he beats all competitors among conservatives, where Jean-Marie Le Pen wins only 24%. What is even more surprising is that Barre (with 57%) is the most popular man with the Gaullists, only 43% favouring Jacques Chirac, while 34% favour Valéry Giscard d'Estaing (the ex-President's highest score). Giscard has also lost his "liberal" image to Barre: among liberals his support stands at 17% (equal with Jacques Chirac), while his former Prime Minister's much broader spectrum of appeal wins him 54% of responses in his favour.

FINALLY, IN TERMS OF *vocabulary, the words "libéralisme" . . . "profit" . . . "participation" . . . "concurrence" (competition) have risen in public favour, whereas "nationalisation" and "trade unions" have seen a corresponding fall. That is good for Fabius, who has been ploughing that furrow, and good for the Right, which is hanging on to its old values; but it remains a problem for President Mitterrand.*

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sake of a French conception worked out in the Churchillian 1950s and the Gaullist 1960s. Technology has evolved since then, developing more accurate, less apocalyptic weapons which are "counter-force" rather than "counter-city"—targeted against military installations, not populations. Can we complain about it evolving in a defensive direction? But the true reason for Western Europe's reservations over the SDI programme has really to do with the slogan "Fortress America." In other words, if the new American strategic defences ever do become intruder-proof, will the United States not be tempted to withdraw into their singularly protected sanctuary, and abandon Europe?

This spectre is all the more haunting because Americans have been reviving the old debate about whether the Europeans are doing quite enough in their own defence. Senator Sam Nunn, who is very far from being a dove, managed to collect 41 senatorial votes in favour of recommending partial withdrawal of American troops from Europe if the NATO countries did not increase their financial contribution to the common defence. It was to refute such criticisms that the European NATO Ministers met to take important decisions to coordinate and improve the use of their resources.

IN FACT, the idea of "Fortress Europe" alternates periodically with another, quite opposite fear—that the Americans might balk at recourse to using nuclear arms to defend an invaded Europe, out of reluctance to expose themselves to Soviet retaliation. When Dr Henry Kissinger declared (in that famous speech delivered in Brussels in 1979): "I doubt that an American President would take the risk of seeing his country destroyed because the Soviets had crossed the Elbe", he caused a proper sensation. At that time Europeans were saying: "The Americans won't come to our aid because they're *too vulnerable*!" Today we are saying "They won't come to our aid because they're becoming *invulnerable*!" This won't do; we have to choose between the two attitudes. I am one of those who believe that with a less vulnerable America, able to honour its commitments without automatically putting its own existence at risk, the alliance can only protect us all the more. After all, when the United

The Changing Landscape

Q—Among all these tendencies, which is the closest to your own ideas?

%	Communist Party	Socialist Party	Ecological Movement*	UDF (Simone Veil)	RPR (Chirac)	Extreme Right*
Conservative	2	—	—	5	4	26
Moderate	4	6	18	28	20	17
Liberal	4	9	31	34	23	26
Gaullist	3	1	11	21	41	11
Social Democrat	2	11	9	7	4	6
Socialist	5	70	7	1	2	5
Communist	72	—	—	—	—	—
Revolutionary	5	1	9	—	—	6
No opinion	3	2	15	4	6	3

* *Because of their small numbers, the findings in these cases need to be interpreted with caution.*

Q—When you think of the economy, which of the following words means something positive or negative to you?

	October 1983 (*Figaro*-Sofres)			February 1985		
	Positive %	Negative %	No Opinion %	Positive %	Negative %	No Opinion %
Planning	34	29	37	37	26	37
Dirigisme	16	53	31	16	54	30
Competition	60	20	20	71	14	15
Nationalisation	34	46	20	33	48	19
Free enterprise	53	21	26	63	15	22
Profit	42	33	25	47	31	22
Protectionism	22	46	32	22	49	29
Trade unions	47	34	19	45	39	16
Capitalism	29	47	24	29	49	22
Worker participation	64	13	23	70	11	19
Socialism	44	34	22	45	36	19

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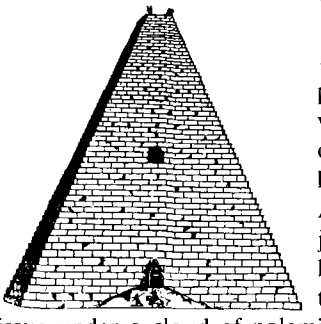
States signed the Atlantic Alliance treaty in 1949 it was not in order to protect themselves. They had nothing to fear from the Soviets, who as yet possessed no nuclear weapons, and for whom a direct operation against American territory was to remain utterly unthinkable for a long time to come.

APART FROM THE strictly European objections, there is one other question which is asked both in the United States and in Europe: Will "strategic defence" not start up the arms race again, with a "militarisation of space"? It is a matter of experience in military history that each time a new protective system is developed, the enemy throws all its ingenuity into finding new weapons to pierce it. To alleviate that risk, Reagan's SDI plan goes hand in hand with the Geneva reopening of Arms Control talks in January 1985. A recent CBS-*New York Times* poll found that, to the question: "Do you think Reagan will make a real effort to negotiate a good agreement on Arms Control with the Soviet Union?" two-thirds of Americans and nine-tenths of those who voted for Reagan answered "Yes." This reply shows that the critics have not succeeded in stamping their image of Reagan-as-warmonger on US public opinion, and that in reopening the talks the President has responded to a very clear-cut wish of his fellow citizens, particularly of those who voted for him.

THE DRAWBACK to Arms Control, much as it is undoubtedly a psychological and political necessity in the West, is that it has always given an extraordinary fillip to arms production. The jewel among the control treaties is the ABM accord of 1972, which was intended to limit the number of anti-ballistic missiles. Yet the effect of this treaty was not only to increase the number of American and Soviet missiles, but also to allow the USSR to overtake the US. That is because it is not always possible to keep a check on the violations of control accords and, when these are found, to prevent them. One of the American negotiators of those accords told me not long ago: "After the signature of the 1972 ABM treaty we said to ourselves: we will denounce the treaty if the Russians violate it, and the Russians know it. But what the Russians knew better still", he went on, "is that we would not dare to denounce the treaty, even if they did violate it." Let us hope that during the lengthy negotiations they will also devise ways of controlling the controls.

Dialogue is not an end in itself. In order for "arms talks" to be useful, they must have another function than reassuring public opinion. If they merely tranquillise it while allowing the threats to grow, they are actively harmful. Let this be one lesson, at least, which survives the years of *détente*.

A Pyramid for Paris



RIGHT FROM the start, the plan to transform the Louvre has been presented as a matter involving the prestige of the President of the Republic, and that has vitalised the whole debate. All aesthetic or practical objections have been instantly labelled political hostility, thus threatening to lose the real issue under a cloud of polemic. However, this is a case in which surely each citizen has both the right and the duty to hesitate, no matter which side he is subsequently free to come down upon.

The authors of *Paris mystifié*[1] reach a hostile verdict, it is true, but they do so as the outcome of a rational process, not instant prejudice. Anyone who reads their book can judge according to the evidence, particularly because the most damning passages are straight quotations.

The so-called "*Entreprise du Grand Louvre*" involves enlarging the museum by giving it charge of the wing of the palace occupied by the *ministère des Finances.* One can only rejoice at an event so long awaited, and the authors of the book are unstinting in their tribute to the Head of State: "The honour of having carried through the reconquest of the palace on behalf of the museum belongs to M. Mitterrand. . . ." The second stage of the plan would concentrate all access for visitors upon a vast crypt dug in the centre of the Cour Napoléon, a huge Métro station or underground air terminal. The third stage involves housing this cavern beneath a transparent, ground-level pyramid.

The idea of a single underground entrance is open to a great many practical objections. Why a single tunnel for those crowds of visitors when the palace is fortunate in having plenty of entrances? Why not exploit the genius of the edifice that the centuries have bequeathed to us? The Louvre is not one but seven different museums, whose enlargement is likely to attract still more. In fact, this extension did not call for any new building. What it required was an architect who specialised in the layout and equipment of interiors. Writing in *Le Monde* (on 10 February 1985), André Chastel asserted:

> "The Louvre museum is notoriously the most poorly maintained, most badly supervised, grubbiest of all the great international establishments. Is the current project likely to cure this humiliating mess?"

He may well ask. As with the *Bibliothèque Nationale*, the Louvre's disease is a matter for modest, persevering therapy, not some decorative poultice.

The latter term is aimed, of course, at that pyramid, which illustrates how monumental a lapse of taste can be brought about by *l'avant-gardisme rétrospectif*. The final gasp of yesteryear's clichés, it is banal in itself and futile in the setting where they plan to plonk it down. "Why fill up a space that does not need to be filled?" asks Henri Cartier-Bresson, in his anxious preface to *Paris mystifié*, and goes on to say:

[1] *Paris mystifié*. By BRUNO FOUCART, SEBASTIEN LOSTE, and ANTOINE SCHNAPPER. Julliard.

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"After a moment's fascination, the disappointment quickly grows unbearable."

Are we to yield because the adoption of the project springs from the personal choice of the *chef de l'Etat*? And this itself, of course, is a real innovation. Hitherto, the plans for buildings destined to become a part of the public heritage have been adopted as the outcome of open competition. The models presented were anonymous and the juries independent. Even Napoleon III respected this procedure for the *Opéra*. His personal preference was for Viollet-le-Duc's design, but the jurors overrode it in favour of Garnier's. Similarly, the *Centre Pompidou* was only begun after a competition and a long period of consultation. If these democratic precautions did not seem superfluous before embarking on major new buildings, how much more essential they must be when it comes to making drastic alterations in the style of a centuries-old jewel in our heritage.

Friendless Truth

THAT Boris Souvarine was never so famous as towards the end of his life (and since his death in Paris in November 1984[1]) is not only another case of a pioneer recognised with hindsight. It poses a serious and tragic question: why is the truth apparently so good for nothing?

This question becomes an obsession with every further page of the recently published collection of Souvarine's reissued writings (*A contre-courant*: Denoël, 368 pp.). Written between 1925 and 1939, these articles obviously did little to enlighten their contemporary readership. Furthermore, their forceful lessons, although fully borne out by the facts, proved no more instructive in the post-War era. It will have taken something like half-a-century for those insights and arguments to have sunk in.

For it is all there: the whole body of themes about Communist societies which have become familiar since . . . about, let's say, 1975. Food shortages, the repressive secret police system, the institutional lie, the corruption of the *nomenklatura*, the dehumanisation—everything described by the Solzhenitsyns, Bukovskys, Zinovievs and so on, we find described in the greatest detail by Souvarine from the late 1920s onward. He also sees that "totalitarianism", far from being explained by any form of national character, has its own inner laws. In 1937 we find him writing:

> "It is important to discard the prejudice which holds that what is accessible to the Russians is not a possibility for the French. . . .The editorial staff of *L'Humanité*, for example, has nothing to lose by comparison with *Pravda*'s in terms of servility and debasement, without having the excuse of being stuck in the gullet of a totalitarian dictatorship. What are we to say about a Romain Rolland, a Langevin or a Malraux, who admire and approve of the so-called Soviet régime without being constrained by hunger or some form of torture? . . ."

For many of the "great voices" of the day glorified Stalin, just as many of today's glorify his successors in the USSR or in the Far East or in the Caribbean or elsewhere. The Communist press, together with general media *de gauche* (all terrified at the horrid thought of ever being accused of "anti-Communism"!), has always maintained that the capitalist "mass media" never stopped denigrating true socialism. That is sheer mythology. What could the lone voice of a Souvarine do, for example, against the powerful Walter Duranty, the *New York Times* correspondent in the USSR in the 1920s and '30s? Inspecting the Ukraine in September 1933, Duranty wrote: "I can state categorically that all the rumours about a famine in this region are ridiculous." It is as if someone dared to insist today that talk about hunger in Ethiopia was nonsense. At the time of the Moscow trials Walter Duranty explained to Americans via his Moscow dispatches to the *New York Times* that "it is unthinkable that Stalin, Voroshilov, Budenny and the court-martial could have condemned their own friends to death without overwhelming proof of their guilt."

Of course, from 1917 until 1925 Boris Souvarine, the "old Bolshevik", was also seriously mistaken abut the Soviet régime; but (as Jeannine Verdès-Leroux perceptively points out, in an introduction to the book which is also a valuable historical study) Souvarine's Communist generation had no standard of comparison. In order to be able to reach a verdict on Communism, it first had to develop enough to afford a pattern. Only practice and the passage of time would enable the lessons of honest experience to be drawn, as Souvarine and some others were to draw them. Their early, temporary error is therefore totally different from that of those later Communists whose aberrations were based upon wilful ignorance of acquired historical experience and enabled ideological scenarios already perfectly well known to be continually repeated.

On 7 May 1939 Souvarine wrote an article in *Le Figaro* forecasting a Soviet-Nazi pact (the Hitler-Stalin agreement was to stagger the world four months later), "Stalin has always wanted to conclude a pact with Hitler's Germany", he said. Fearing that these ill-timed remarks would damage the good relations between Paris and Moscow, the Quai d'Orsay put a certain pressure on *Le Figaro*. The paper never accepted another article from Souvarine. . . . I suppose one could say that, a year before humiliating national defeat, France had just invented a form of "*détente*."

J.-F. R.

[1] See my note "Boris Souvarine", in ENCOUNTER, March 1985.

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War in the Mind

Ideals, Admonitions & Overviews—By GEOFFREY BEST

HOW YOU DO ANYTHING depends mainly on what you've been thinking or taking for granted about it beforehand, and War is at the top of the list of public things which get done this way. States and other potential war-making bodies (nowadays one dare not neglect the others' existence!) cannot start fighting with free hands; they have to do it with materials, weapons and plans made long in advance and with whatever state of mind history has given them.

The start of any war is in such ways pre-conditioned. How it then goes, of course, can be another matter; war being supremely a realm of chance, risk, and surprise. But the fact that wars rarely turn out as intended by those who start them, and often turn out disastrously for all who experience them, has not yet stamped its lesson on the general consciousness of mankind. One of its mufflers is the extraordinary power, found from earliest times in folk-memory and high culture alike, to turn war's pains and disasters—plentiful enough in even the seemingly successful ones—into matters of pride and consolation. The German people, to take a local example, took forward from 1914-18 a terrible legacy of suffering and loss, which the passage of time in many ways only sharpened;[1] yet by the turn of the 1940s . . . ! Our species' cultural appetite is ostrich-gargantuan in its ability to digest and recycle all the gravel and garbage deposited by war along with the more nutritious left-overs. Civil wars are nothing to it; Arnhems, White Mountains, Masadas are grist to its mill equally with Trafalgars and Okinawas; in the officers' mess of Valhalla, as in the Stygian Other Ranks' bar below, they are all good guys—and a surprising number are heroes too.

Such cultural digestion having churned endlessly on since the first syllable of recorded time, study of the means by which all bearable suggestions of *le phénomène guerre* (the trail-blazing polemologist Gaston Bouthoul's fine phrase for it) are formed and re-formed in the minds of men and women is a matter of larger significance and likelier relevance in 1985 than the stricter sort of Future-watchers might suppose. The historian must at once admit that History proper is one of the genres of transmission that matters least. The proportion of humankind concerned to know what is "true"—even, to be in a position to bear the truth—rather than to believe what is comfortable must be infinitesimal. Two genres that matter much more than scholarly history are the picture book and the anthology; strange specimens of each are now before us.

SIR JOHN HACKETT'S *The Profession of Arms*[2] is curious in this questionable club because, besides having waited twenty years to join, it has a text worth reading in its own right. And no surprise at that! It began in 1962 as a neat little presentation of the General's view of his vocation, enjoying the double authority of one who had braved death in battle and who, as something of a classicist besides, knew more than most educated soldiers about war and warfare in the ancient world. Military history and war studies have moved on massively since then (it may be added, to the great credit of Hackett himself, that when Principal of King's College in London University he wrought mightly to promote them), and an up-dating of that book to take account of dramatic developments since then (e.g. Viet Nam and what it showed about the American branch of the business) could have been a good idea anyway, for even within so small a scale Hackett's touch is deft and his judgment sensible and humane.

But observe what has happened! That decent, modest, reasonable little text—warm with love of the warrior virtues, anxious in response to the call of just and limited war, rapid in recoil from whatever violences may be illimitable, irrevocable, and politically purposeless—has now been pictorially tarted-up in a manner which is an indignity to all concerned. This text was not composed with pictures in mind, and the pictures thrust upon it hardly fit. Most of them are the same old lot from the same old sources seen so often before.

[1] *Bitter Wounds: German Victims of the Great War, 1914-1939*. By ROBERT WELDON WHALEN. Cornell University Press, $24.95.

[2] *The Profession of Arms*. By GENERAL SIR JOHN HACKETT. Sidgwick & Jackson, £7.95.

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The only surprising ones are the six of the author himself, which could make one wonder whether the celebrity of his best-selling World War III fictions ("The only history books they read at Sandhurst now", a critic of that academy's shrinking syllabus once remarked) is not going to his head.

One good excuse for this razzle-dazzle is conceivable: "pictures will bring horses to the water who would otherwise miss the drink; lust of the eye can lead on the brain." I wish I could believe it. It seems to me that lust of the eye is more likely to distract or dodge the brain. Down among the picture books—a genre which sinks rapidly to immeasurable depths of vulgarity and mindlessness—war-fanciers will flip through these pages without giving a hang for Hackett. I call that a pity, because he is worth critical and reflective reading.

But there is another danger, which this reduction of the seriousness-level can only increase. For all incidental cautions and caveats, Hackett's is a sanguine, happy account of the profession he rejoices to belong to. One of the winning things about his text (and along with it, the tacked-on essay on Leadership) is that so much of it is morally attractive: honour, chivalry, courage, loyalty, discipline, patriotism, comradeship, sacrifice, efficiency in the use of arms, and a certain concern for the justice of the cause.

All very true so far as it goes. But it doesn't go very far; it goes, in fact, hardly beyond the military cultures of old Europe and, interestingly adapted, new North America. Even in those favoured parts of the world it is an ideal more easily praised than practised, more often perverted than a decent soldier can like to remember. As for the rest of the world, it's a picture which fades into the light of common day with terrible rapidity. All of those virtues, moreover, are only a knife-edge away from their terrible opposites, of which, for example, the officer corps of Central and South America, who love to be accepted in the same club, give due warning: professions of arms decked out in the same gaudy dress and mouthing the same grand words but using them to justify oppression, mendacity, torture, press-ganging, and murder. In Hackett's happy pages there is no precautionary antidote to an uncritical equation of these worst of their profession with the author's own best; and the pictures, Euro-North American from start to finish, can only aid the cosy slide. He cannot be blamed for not having written a different book, but an observer of the place of war in today's mentalities may well wonder what effects war books like this must have, which continue to harp on everything in war that is best and brightest.

THE ANTHOLOGY on the other hand comes from the realm of what is worst and darkest. The editors of *In a Dark Time*[3]—anti-war scientists both—have tried to do again what like-minded souls have often tried to do in the past. They seek to make our flesh creep and our minds change. If only we could crack our habitual states of mind about War, our blunted perceptions of its horrors, would not

[3] *In a Dark Time*. Edited by NICHOLAS HUMPHREY and ROBERT JAY LIFTON. Faber, £8.95, paper £3.95.

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the scales fall from our eyes and our energies be roused to manage things better?

The purpose, of course, is excellent and the idea not unreasonable. But I see no evidence that it ever yet worked, and I wish I could believe that it might work better now. Photographic anti-war anthologies have had horrors a-plenty to show, since at any rate 1914-18; literary anthologies, much thickened by that same war, could always call largely on riches from earlier ages; the documentary and eye-witness anthology has become a drug on the market. The hope born anew in anthologists since we first saw that mushroom-shaped cloud is that the nature of nuclear weapons and the prospects of nuclear catastrophe will arouse to hitherto unprecedented heights their power to shock and to terrify. Certain types of mind are no doubt thus moved, but how common are they? Is nuclear sensitivity not something of an acquired taste? In any case, pictures and descriptions of what happened to victims in Hamburg do not seem objectively less moving and terrible in themselves than pictures and descriptions of what happened to victims in Hiroshima. A nuclear end to the world would be for most of us an unimaginably ghastly thing, but there precisely is the difficulty; except for the relatively few who imagine their case to be different, it *is* unimaginable. . . .

What then is to be done? And is there any hope that our latest admonitory anthologists can do it? So good is their cause, so pure are their hearts, that one doubts it with real regret. Indeed, they are themselves partly to blame. Not all of these bits and pieces are worth reproducing; nor do they all self-evidently cohere. An historian winces at the questions begged, the part-truths palmed off, in the bits of Bertrand Russell on pp. 57-8, Thomas Merton on 144-6. Only the already converted will not find a good deal of the romantic and sentimental here. No trace appears of any understanding of the primary truths taken for granted in Political Science and International Relations, that States cannot help having security concerns and that their ways of handling them will sometimes be ugly.

"Well then [I hear Humphrey and Lifton say], that's precisely the point, isn't it? Your vaunted classic truths, your tried-and-tested methods never worked all that well, and they now seem incapable of working at all. You too obviously need a course of mental-mould-breaking treatment." Their pages on psychology are among their best. On what keeps War-thoughts bubbling in the minds of man—on language, culture, custom and mentality—a reader would have to be "psychically numbed" and invincibly insensitive indeed not to find their analysis persuasive, sketchy though it is. The way ahead must include some reconstruction of the common mind; and those who are ready to risk the imputation of madness by saying such an extraordinary thing ought to feel able to defend themselves by pointing out that they are no more mad than the world has become in its continuing inability to overcome its collective suicidal impulse and its never-ending compulsions towards aggression—the very getting-used-to-which may be seen as a form of dementia in itself.

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Just as madness need not be seen as total or unremitting, so the reconstruction of human mentality need not be seen as the only solution, which is rather the way people like Humphrey and Lifton see it. The resources of earlier, not-so-insane civilisation are not exhausted. The State-system's classic diplomatic and power-political ways of handling disputes and difficulties could do more. It is not unreasonable to believe that they have handled the superpowers' nuclear rivalry so far with tolerable success. In any case, nuclear was doesn't have to be seen as the greatest present threat to our species' health. An excess of nuclear weapons in the first and second worlds in fact seems to me less of a threat than the excess of rifles in the third.

But those who continue to place some trust in diplomacy and gunpowder mustn't exaggerate their efficacy, or misjudge the extent of Western responsibility for them. Statecraft and diplomacy on behalf of democracies can never do more than nations let them. It's a sobering thought that the hold citizens pride themselves on having over the international affairs conducted in their name can in practice be so faltering and produce such self-damaging disasters. *Lloyd George, Woodrow Wilson and the Guilt of Germany* by A. Lentin,[4] a splendid book by one of the Open University's historians, is a reminder of just how disastrous democracy and public opinion can be for diplomacy.

Lentin's book is a beautifully written, elegiac, cultivated scrutiny of how Wilson's well-meant "Fourteen Points"—with not much alteration, the ground of Germany's peace-terms expectations at the armistice—became the Carthaginian Peace of Clemenceau and Lloyd George, a peace corrupted by the universally-lamented "War Guilt clause" and the blank cheque for reparations. The British Prime Minister was principally responsible for pressing them home (part of that Wilson-bamboozling process J. M. Keynes so memorably identified). And why? For nothing more than parliamentary success and demagogic popularity. The world paid a high price for that exercise in democracy. The Treaty of Versailles was not merely a classic example of a bad peace treaty; its making was a classic demonstration of how self-damagingly war can continue in the public mind after a war is over.

[4] *Lloyd George, Woodrow Wilson and the Guilt of Germany*. By A. Lentin. Leicester University Press, £11.95.

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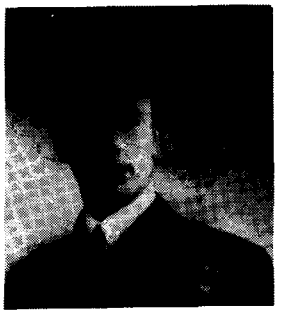
Supreme Command

Earl Mountbatten of Burma—By ALAN CAMPBELL-JOHNSON



I CONFESS to having awaited the publication of Philip Ziegler's official biography of Mountbatten[1] with high expectation, and just a trace of anxiety. Having served for six years on Mountbatten's staff and spent a further six compiling source material for just such a book, I considered the project sufficiently difficult to put at risk the historical reputation of subject and author alike. At the end of the fascinating 700-page journey, I can report confidently that Mountbatten passes the Ziegler test and Ziegler has met the Mountbatten challenge. The outcome is a biographical *tour de force*.

Towards the end of Mountbatten's life there was perhaps a danger of the story becoming trivialised and distorted; indeed, some of Mountbatten's latter-day involvement in pop projections of himself left Ziegler "undeceived" but enraged to the point of momentarily losing his cool and complaining of his hero's "determination to hoodwink" him. I doubt whether Mountbatten deceived anybody but himself with these exercises. Certainly during his mid-career, when I saw him on almost a daily basis, his vanity or egoism was more lighthearted than many critics—acquainted with him only as a septuagenarian on TV, or writing his own obituary—have taken to be the case. This was the period when he was successively Chief of Combined Operations, Supreme Allied Commander, and Viceroy; and the scale, pace and level of his activities obliged him to lose himself in the demands of the job.

Just how dominant these were is brought out in the balance of Ziegler's narrative. Half the book is needed to cover those six momentous years, and to keep the story down to one volume the "triple assignment" is if anything foreshortened. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that had this "interruption" to his naval career not occurred, and had Churchill not suddenly and dramatically extracted him from taking over command of the aircraft carrier *Illustrious*, Mountbatten would have been little more than a footnote to history. It is even doubtful whether an uninterrupted naval career would have led quite so inevitably to the fulfilment of his ultimate professional ambition of sitting in his father's chair as First Sea Lord.

Was Mountbatten's ambition as "unbridled" as Ziegler asserts and some reviewers of the book assume? A conflict is indeed discernible here, best summed up in the proposition that inside every great man is a small man trying to get on. Once seconded to these high and special duties, Mountbatten's performance was in effect the reverse of ambitious. The terms of reference in each instance provided no precedents, only numerous danger signs and "no-go" areas, the built-in resistance, national and international, of powerful military and political establishments. In dealing with this permanent high-risk situation, Mountbatten seemed to me to put the normal manifestations of ambition into cold storage and to act with almost arrogant indifference to his personal position.

Ziegler's densely packed narrative has not unnaturally inspired a wide range of reactions from a most distinguished posse of biographers. The assessments of Mountbatten spread across a spectrum from the "genius" of Disraeli's Lord Blake to the "lightweight" of Montgomery's Nigel Hamilton, with Asquith's Roy Jenkins plumping for "a great personality" rather than a great man and Queen Victoria's Lady Longford going nap on "his charm." The life story of the Earl Mountbatten of Burma has provided rich critical pastures from the true-blue Toryism of Julian Amery to the up-market gossip of Alastair Forbes, from which Mountbatten emerges as

> *a man so various that he seemed to be*
> *not one but all mankind's epitome.*

In the welter of conflicting comment, discerning and sharp though much of it is, the impression remains that the full measure of Mountbatten has still to be taken.

There is no serious argument that, from the moment Queen Victoria took him in her arms at his christening, he was born great. Nor, from the moment Winston Churchill summoned him to Combined Operations with a blank cheque to act offensively and make it into a war-winning instrument, can it be gainsaid that he had greatness thrust upon him. Shakespeare's third test—whether thereafter he achieved greatness—I can best approach by delving into my experiences while I was on his staff and observing at increasingly close range his policy-making activities. But how great in conception, intrinsic status, and formative historical influence were the three posts he was asked to fill? Ziegler, in pursuit of the momentum of his hero's life story, provides only background evidence on this theme, and is not unnaturally more concerned with the player than the play. Some commentators in assessing Mountbatten's response have failed to do justice to the scale and immediacy of the challenge.

When, a month after the fall of France, Winston Churchill—"his mind working like the revolving beam of a

[1] *Mountbatten*. By PHILIP ZIEGLER. Collins, £15.00.

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lighthouse"—appointed Roger Keyes Director of Combined Operations, he was creating a revolution in the higher direction of the War which he duly consolidated fifteen months later when he replaced the senior and inflexible Keyes with the junior and amenable Mountbatten. As Bernard Fergusson in his classic history of Combined Operations, *The Watery Maze* (1961), succinctly put it: "C.O.H.Q. became not only the forcing house for new techniques and amphibious equipment; it became also the power-house for harnessing our maritime potential." On Mountbatten's role he was similarly robust: "There are still a few to decry the magnitude of Mountbatten's achievement; but historically speaking, to use a nautical phrase, they are spitting to windward."

I ARRIVED AT Mountbatten's Combined Operations Headquarters two months before the ill-fated Dieppe Raid, having been posted there or rather "invited to join the party" following a lively interrogation by the Chief of Combined Operations, who stressed that he wanted volunteers whose heart would be in the party's objectives. The place he wanted me to fill was that of Air Public Relations Officer, completing a group that already had representatives from the British and US Armies and the Royal Marines, as well as a Commanding Officer from the RAF. But Mountbatten immediately qualified the word "representatives": if I was to have any chance of success in the job I must forget the uniform I was wearing. He advised me that he took a direct and personal interest in public relations, which for him was not just a matter of devising publicity but a part of responsibility of command at the highest level. From then on, I was to be ever more closely involved with Mountbatten as communicator.

One of my marginal duties was to monitor enemy reactions on radio in the course of the Dieppe Raid. It became surprisingly clear to me that discordant notes were being struck in the enemy's jubilant propaganda, that political and military aims were confused during the first 48 hours and no serious efforts afterwards were made to reconcile them. In spite of all his other preoccupations, this point at once interested Mountbatten sufficiently to pass it on immediately to Brendan Bracken, the Minister of Information, confirming thereby the high priority he always gave to propagandist issues.

Post-mortems on the Dieppe Raid have tended to cast distorting shadows over Mountbatten's record and purpose as CCO. Its ambiguous origins and dubious command structure all point to failure arising from the application of too few rather than too many Combined Operations techniques and principles. This was borne in on me when I was assigned to the task of drafting the story of the highly successful St Nazaire Raid for what was to be a best-selling Ministry of Information booklet on Combined Operations. Ziegler covers that heroic enterprise a little too lightly—its planning and execution were in significant contrast to Dieppe. As Mountbatten wrote:

> "Of all the operations with which I was concerned in the late war . . . St Nazaire is perhaps the one I am most proud to have been associated with. . . . I know of no other case in naval or military annals of such effective damage being inflicted so swiftly with such economy of force."

After Dieppe the one-off raiding phase was superseded by Combined Operations' significant contributions to invasions in the Mediterranean theatre. The lessons from Dieppe also reinforced Mountbatten's case for the ultimate landing to be in Normandy, carrying (with his prize project, *Mulberry*) its own artificial harbour.

WITH MOUNTBATTEN'S TRANSLATION to the post of Supreme Allied Commander South East Asia, the problem of his authority, the status of his assignment, and the timing of his actions entered a new dimension. Once again Churchill's initiative had led to his appointment. Mountbatten continued to fit in to the Roosevelt-Churchill-Combined Chiefs of Staff system with its inter-allied and inter-service superstructure directing basically national and separate land, sea, and air forces. The only trouble was that within two months of Mountbatten pitching his camp in Delhi, the overt and effective *raison d'être* of the Command had been removed from him: his appointment coincided with acceptance, at the Quadrant

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Conference, of a Pacific strategy which confined South East Asia Command to little more than a holding role. Even within that framework, resources for independent amphibious operations were taken from him. By January 1944 the cupboard was indeed bare.

At the age of forty-four Naval Captain, Acting Admiral, surrounded by a cadre of officers all far senior to himself but technically under his command, with Auchinleck relegated to commanding GHQ India as a supply base and Field Marshal Lord Wavell as Viceroy, he seemed, to put it mildly, vulnerable. My job as Recorder and War Diarist was to attend the big meetings and ensure that they were duly docketed in duplicate for London and Washington on instructions handed down from President and Prime Minister. I recall one particularly significant meeting on 31 January 1944 with Mountbatten and all his Commanders in Chief, together with his acidulated Deputy Supreme Commander, General Stilwell. Mountbatten was calling for support for the Axiom Mission led by the American General Wedemeyer, Mountbatten's Deputy Chief of Staff, to present a new strategy for SEAC in London and Washington. It was a tense, confused and complex encounter. Admiral Somerville (so senior that it embarrassed Mountbatten to take a salute from him) for much of the time reserved his position; Stilwell was at odds with everyone in general, and with Wedemeyer in particular; yet somehow Mountbatten emerged with an authority over all that gold braid which he was never to lose.

I cannot extract from the notes precisely how this dominance was achieved, and no official record was made, but Mountbatten succeeded in implying at the outset that he had been placed in a position he had never sought, and if at the highest level there was any indication that he was not *persona grata*, he would not hesitate to go back to the President and Prime Minister who had sent him there. If he had to do so, he would not like to answer for the consequences for those he left behind in high command.

That test over, he quickly settled an important difference with Auchinleck over reinforcing the Bengal-Assam Railway with American logistical assistance. At a private meeting I had with him on 19 February 1944, all his buoyancy had returned. My note records:

> "He spoke of the importance of the Axiom Mission . . . for the first time an outlying theatre of operations was exercising direct influence on world strategy . . . the present Arakan battle [the "Batttle of the Box"] was 'one of the historic battles of the war.' Japanese troops were carrying out the same outflanking operation as last year, but now on a much larger scale. Whereas last year the enemy just outflanked us and we had to turn tail, now the same troops were standing firm. Nobody moved. This was a tremendous test. If we won this particular battle it would have the utmost morale consequence. . . .
>
> As for the Chiefs of Staff [with whom he had to deal for resources], his policy towards them was to go ahead first and ask permission afterwards, which had the effect of putting the onus on them for the cancellation of specific operations. This was not always possible. But to wait upon their general approval was often to risk doing nothing at all."

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The "Battle of the Box" was duly won but less than a month later larger events had taken command of plans and blueprints. My private interview note for 23 March reads:

> "Supreme Commander raised the question of the threat to Imphal—the decisions and action taken which he considered should be regarded as of historical importance. He said that although this threat had for some time been apparent there was an atmosphere of complete complacency at the various headquarters nor any apparent awareness of an imminent crisis. He said that if the Fifth Division had been transferred [from Arakan] by road the move would have started about the beginning of April and would not have been completed until the 24th April. He found that there had been made no provision for another division or for a division from India which he wanted. They only awoke to the danger following his two hours talk with Slim on the 13th March; after this they were fully alive to the situation and almost more alarmed than he was.
>
> He discussed the matter with the Army on Tuesday 14th March, with the Air Force on Wednesday 15th March. On Friday 17th March approval for transport aircraft was received and Monday 20th March 123 Brigade with mules and jeeps was being flown in."

Mountbatten's role in supplying and sustaining resources for the defence of Imphal was a decisive contribution, but one which he felt he should not have had to make. In the general context of the campaign, credit must be given to the importance he placed on grappling with malaria and fighting on through the monsoon period, and his permanent emphasis on the flow of communications with the troops through both the written and the spoken word—the SEAC newspaper and Radio SEAS. His own soap-box appearances in the jungle were carefully planned improvisations: "They call you the forgotten Army—you are not forgotten—they have never heard of you!" But with him about, his audience knew they soon would. This was theatre and public relations in the best sense of that much abused term.

After the move from Delhi to Kandy, far too much time was taken up in what were to prove abortive wranglings over plans which like a mirage rose up only to disappear; but all the time Japanese power was being sapped, and General Slim was consummating a brilliant offensive over impossible terrain, with Rangoon captured by separate assaults a few hours before the monsoon. Then came Mountbatten's sudden call to Potsdam.

I had returned home to contest the General Election and he asked me over to his house, Broadlands, advising me cryptically of the horrific atomic fate awaiting Japan. He was having to send back messages about the likely impact on SEAC's future role, including calling off at the last moment the need to invade Malaya and assuming responsibility for the whole of Indonesia, and he feared that his Chief of Staff General Browning would think he had taken leave of his senses. "There will be quite a lot for your Records to absorb", he said.

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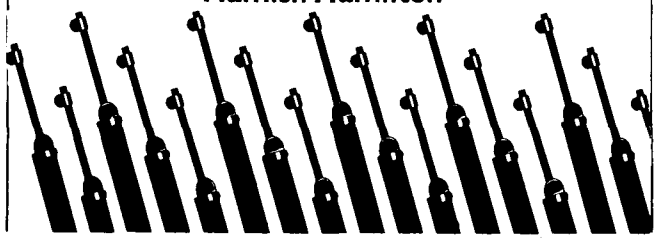

THERE WAS INDEED a credibility gap in what Mountbatten was called upon to undertake. His so-called "post-Surrender tasks" involved him in a baptism by total immersion. I still find it hard to believe that one man could have taken on board so many disparate but desperate problems—crisis piling on crisis—at one and the same time. The title of Supreme Allied Commander assumed a meaning beyond anything originally intended for it. Political as well as military responsibility for 126 million people, half a dozen emerging nations, three returning empires, and hundreds of thousands of Allied and enemy prisoners-of-war. If ever a man was grappling in darkness with destiny, that man was Mountbatten in South-east Asia from the autumn of 1945 to the spring of 1946.

Lord Blake's attribution of "genius" certainly applies to his performance during this bizarre period. I detected, when all this pressure was on, Mountbatten's instinctive sense of the nature of power and his no less instinctive sense of timing in meeting its demands. His policies and actions were based on an understanding of those forces as neutral; his flair was in his skill in applying communications (public and private) to assuage their harsher realities. When out of the blue he learned that he was to be the last Viceroy, he was already an authority on the transfer of power, having assumed it at Combined Operations, and remitted it in South-east Asia.

On the other side of the coin was his sensitivity to and defence of his own power. When I handed over the United States copy of the SEAC Records to the Pentagon in April

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1946, I was summoned into the presence of General Eisenhower, then US Chief of Staff. He used the occasion to launch into a general dissertation on the appropriate status of Supreme Allied Commanders, saying that he thought that he and Mountbatten were the only two officers in World War II who had had "a full work-out" in the position. Reporting on the interview, I wrote to Mountbatten:

> "He contrasted Foch's position with his own. How Foch was no more than a 'god-damned liaison officer', while he, Eisenhower, landed four Divisions at Antwerp only to take all their ammunition from them for special support operations. This was action of a type which would have led to Foch's instant dismissal, but still he considered that the full circle had not yet been run. He believed that experience would show that the powers of the Supreme Commander in every theatre needed further extension. He would like to see the Supreme Commander of one nationality in a position to dismiss an inefficient or subordinate General of another. . . . At the end of the interview he turned to me and paid a tremendous spontaneous tribute to you. 'Dickie', he said with great emphasis, 'in my view is one of the great Commanders of this war'."

MY THIRD ASSIGNMENT with Mountbatten, this time in a civilian capacity, had me emerging from a backroom to a frontline position as the first and only Press Attaché to a Viceroy. The title didn't matter much; the function did. I kept an informal diary of those climactic fifteen months. It was published under the title *Mission With Mountbatten* some four years after the events it described, and absorbed thereafter as a primary source into the bloodstream of quite a lot of literature about Indian Independence and the last Viceroy.

Its forthcoming republication 34 years later may perhaps release me from returning to its mood or relying on its evidence, but for those who will be reading Ziegler for their first inside view, I can say that he has worked his way through the various controversies with a well-constructed and balanced narrative. Once again I must stress Mountbatten's insight into power and timing. By June 1947, power in the sub-continent had run out. A few days before the 3rd June Plan for the partition of the sub-continent was announced, Phillips Talbot, one of the most discerning and best informed foreign correspondents (he represented the *Chicago Daily News*) wrote a special foreign policy report entitled "The Independence of India", analysing the prolonged prologue of violence. He concluded:

> "Already the administration of India is so far run down that as one Indian expressed it 'the only reason why we have not fallen into anarchy is that people have not yet realised we are already there'. . . . If for any reason the transfer of power is delayed or a successor government or governments do not appear promptly the chances of disruption will increase."

As Rajagopalachari (the Indian elder statesman who suc-

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ceeded Mountbatten as Governor-General) so wisely said, "If you had not transferred power when you did there would have been no power to transfer." General Ismay, no less sensitive to the destructive forces at work, confirmed the need for rapid decision.

One central issue was Mountbatten's relations with Jinnah. (A comparison could perhaps be made between Jinnah and de Gaulle—men of inflexible will and single sovereign purpose, haughty, cold and distant, and operating from privileged weakness, they both had a veto in their pockets until the final crunch. For Jinnah the crunch came on 2 June 1947 when he took himself and the Viceroy to the brink of disaster, only to recover and save them both with a silent nod when Mountbatten accepted the Partition Plan on his behalf in the presence of the other Indian leaders.[2]

Far different but at times hardly more predictable was Mountbatten's relationship with Nehru. I had the good fortune to be present for their historic first encounter in Singapore, when Mountbatten was in the midst of his post-Surrender tasks. It was an event which certainly would not have taken place if Mountbatten had not insisted upon it. I belonged to the small minority on his staff in favour, and because I had met Nehru before the War, I was asked by Mountbatten to prepare a brief biography of him, and to come in for coffee after the family dinner. Mountbatten did all the talking, I noted, and Nehru nearly all the thinking. Mountbatten covered Indonesian problems, Potsdam, Indian troops in Java, Malayan unrest, the lot—which Nehru did his best to absorb. There was a happy moment at the end, when Mountbatten at his most expansive declared about one of the crises: "In short, everything I did, I tried to think of in the light of history, what it will look like in ten years time." "Yes", said Nehru, his slight sad smile betraying no trace of irony, "that helps us to escape the present." History was soon to decree that there would be no such escape for either of them.

A key participant at this famous meeting was of course Lady Mountbatten who was nearly trampled on at a reception in honour of Nehru; at no small risk he had helped to rescue her. Her contribution to the post-Surrender and Indian story is already legendary. Whether she was psychologically competing with Mountbatten, or whether they were emotionally distanced from each other is immaterial. Historically it is their public partnership that really mattered. They were inextricably linked, and the Mountbattens are forever in the plural, as at different levels and in different spheres are the Brownings, the Lunts, or the Webbs. The challenge and the response were well matched, but Edwina was involved at the human and personal end of it and took

[2] To name the contingent of influential women at the sides of the Indian leaders during the transfer of power is to take an impressive roll-call—the stern Miss Jinnah, Nan Pandit and Indira Gandhi, the Begum Liaquat Ali Khan, Maniben Patel, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur and the redoubtable Sarojini Naidu. I doubt whether a more formidable feminine array has been *in situ* at a critical moment in world history to support or influence the action.

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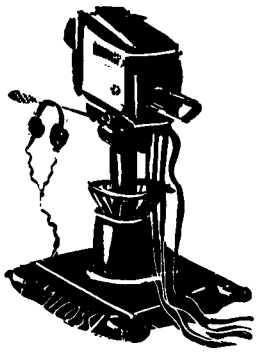
therefore the greater physical strain, to the point of self-destruction. They were in themselves a combined operation, a supreme command, and in the best sense Excellencies.

I will close as I began—with Mountbatten as communicator. Briefly, he was throughout, rather than a writing or literary man, a talking or (in the jargon) an audio-visual man, who came to his prime just ahead of the television revolution. Here he differs from Churchill who so closely influenced him in so many other ways. Men of Churchill's and Gandhi's generation believed far more in the sufficiency of the message delivered direct to the living audience or individual reader—Churchill once called television "a terrifying enlargement of human power", and Gandhi distrusted radio's secret publics, preferring to write letters in his own hand. Mountbatten tended to be suspicious of and to underestimate what was written; he wanted always to simplify, to popularise, and in particular to photograph. He was a believer in developing and using an image, but had passed his political and personal zenith before that term came to its full meaning.

In my entry for 5 June 1947 in *Mission With Mountbatten*, I included a personal impression prepared at the request of an American press correspondent. "Mountbatten is essentially an extrovert character who does not relish silence or solitude but is at his very best in public", I wrote. And after setting out most of the pluses and minuses which Philip Ziegler has duly elaborated, I felt bound to conclude, as I still feel after forty years: "All in all a rare and refreshing spirit, and whether on the quarter-deck or in Viceroy's House a democratic leader of the first magnitude."

"The Real England"

National Character in Wartime Films—By JEFFREY RICHARDS



THE RUSSIAN film director Pudovkin wrote of Noël Coward's naval film *In Which We Serve* (1942): "It's a splendid job, overwhelming in its complete and well-thought-out frankness. One of my comrades called it profoundly national and I fully agree with him. The picture is English through and through. You can see the real face of England in it." An RAF flying officer serving in the Balkans wrote to *The Observer* after seeing Coward's *This Happy Breed* (1944) on three consecutive nights with an enthusiastic audience of Dominion and Allied troops, that they were "seeing England, the real England for the first time." *The Observer*'s respected film critic C. A. Lejeune wrote of Frank Launder and Sidney Gilliat's *Millions Like Us* (1943): "This is something real. Here for once is a cinema notion that can be satisfactorily related to the experiences of everyday." A 24-year-old Admiralty typist wrote to *Picturegoer*:

> "The two *Best* British films ever made—*In Which We Serve* and *This Happy Breed*, such realism, such tradegy [sic], and humanity, these people were us, were our Fathers and Mothers after the last war, were our husbands and brothers in this war."

These are just a few of the wealth of contemporary comments from home and abroad, from critics and public alike, about British wartime films. The realism which they perceived was a product of the War. When hostilities broke out in 1939, the cinemas were initially closed down. But their value to the maintenance of morale was soon appreciated and they were reopened, to become one of the principal sources of recreation for the nation at war. Feature films were seen as providing not just escapist entertainment but also instruction and information. For the duration of the War the film industry operated under the watchful eye of the Ministry of Information, whose first Minister, Lord MacMillan, issued a memorandum in 1940 laying out the themes for propaganda films. What Britain was fighting for, how Britain was fighting, and the need for sacrifice were to be the principal themes. The industry responded to these suggestions, and experienced perhaps its finest hour—a surge of creativity, an explosion of native talent. The nature and demands of the situation focused the mind of the film world squarely and continuously on the projection of Britain and the British people, something that had on the whole not occurred in the 1930s.

It took some time for the propaganda machine to sort itself out, and there were a number of blunders and an overall lack of direction in the early years, which resulted in such notorious episodes as that of the much-criticised poster slogan, "*Your* courage, *your* cheerfulness, *your* resolution will bring *us* victory"—an unconscious indictment of a nation irredeemably divided by class barriers. But this was soon superseded by the slogan "Let us go forward together", and the propagation on all fronts of the concept of "The People's War", the idea of ordinary people pulling together to defeat a common foe.

The War saw a change not only in the quality of British films but also in their nature. A twin process can be perceived: what might be called "democratisation" and "documentarisation", the response to the call from critics and commentators for greater realism in British films. What they meant was realism in setting, content, and character. This led to the lower middle class and—within limits—the working

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class being treated seriously for the first time in the mainstream commercial cinema. The cinema-going public responded gratefully. As Noël Coward discovered from conversations about *In Which We Serve* with crews of the Royal Navy ships carrying him on his tour of Mediterranean bases, "They were delighted with the fact that the lower deck had been presented in the film not as comic relief but as an integral and vital part of the story."

THE DOCUMENTARISTS OF THE 1930s, essentially a fringe group producing films for non-commercial distribution, became central to the cinema's war effort. Documentaries came more and more to resemble feature films in narrative structure, and commercial features took on more and more of the surface realism of documentaries. Writing in 1947 on the cinema's wartime output, Dilys Powell singled out *In Which We Serve* as a turning point: "*In Which We Serve* has set a new standard. . . . What makes it historically important in the British cinema is its use of two significant motives: documentary background and the native theme."

It has become fashionable to mock and disparage *In Which We Serve*. But *a priori* hindsight judgments are notoriously dangerous when trying to understand the national mood and the effect of popular culture during times of crisis. *In Which We Serve* was universally praised by the critics, highbrow and lowbrow alike, and was the top British money-maker of its year at the box-office. As Dilys Powell wrote:

> "The emotional impact of *In Which We Serve* was immense. The experiences of civilian and fighting men were presented as essentially one, bound together by ties of human love and devotion; nobody but felt that he had a stake in the drama. . . . Noël Coward in *In Which We Serve* took a handful of typically British men and women and made from their stories, ordinary enough in themselves, a distillation of national character . . . Coward's film spoke for the navy, to some effect, for tough though the British sailor holds himself, admirals and ratings alike were observed in tears at its performance."

It was, then, the film's emotional truth, its tribute to endurance, self-sacrifice, stoical humour, and team spirit that endeared the film to the nation. These qualities were to be central to the national war effort and were to be seen as integral to the national character. The national character, "showing our independence, toughness of fibre, sympathy with the underdog etc.", was by the Ministry of Information's directive to be one of the main objects for feature-film dramatisation.

TO SEE HOW THE CINEMA RESPONDED, let us examine two examples, both deriving their titles from parts of the "This England" speech in Shakespeare's *Richard II*. This was one of the most quoted of all Shakespeare's speeches during the War, and it stresses the first factor of which we must take note. Despite the almost obligatory presence of Gordon Jackson or John Laurie as the token Scotsman in films which depicted the national effort in microcosm (for instance, *Millions Like Us* and *The Way Ahead*) and despite occasional nods in the direction of Wales (such as *The Proud Valley* and *The Silent Village*), the national identity derived almost entirely from England—which was often used interchangeably with Britain to describe the United Kingdom. This is a practice which I too must follow to make sense of what was written and spoken at the time, however vexatious this may be to Celtic nationalists.

The Demi-Paradise (1943), directed by Anthony Asquith and written and produced by the Anglophile White Russian émigré Anatole de Grunwald, was the British cinema's principal gesture towards Anglo-Russian friendship. It emerged, however, as a triumphant celebration of England and Englishness, which are seen through the eyes of a visiting Russian engineer, brilliantly played by Laurence Olivier. Ivan Kouznetsoff visits England first in 1939 to commission a new ice-breaker. He arrives armed with the belief that the English are humourless, arrogant, narrow-minded, bellicose, hypocritical, and that their system is a capitalist and Imperialist tyranny.

The film proceeds to show how he is disabused of each of these beliefs in turn during his stay with the upper-middle-class Tisdall family in the composite market-town and seaport with the resonant name of Barchester. It is Ann Tisdall, the daughter of the family, who gives a resounding defence of the British Empire, acquired by private adventure rather than state expansion, the work of explorers, romantics and idealists, and since acquisition, well-governed. Even more surprising for Ivan is his encounter with Ann's grandfather, Runalow—the acceptable face of Victorian values. Runalow the industrialist turns out to be a gentle, wise, cultivated eccentric in wing collar and pince-nez. He is an engineering genius, who has learned *Bradshaw* by heart; a millionaire who is interested not in money but in playing the piano and reading poetry; an employer who carries on working because of his sense of responsibility towards his employees, the motto of his firm being "Duty and Service." Ivan is finally exasperated by the local pageant, a convincingly awful recreation, complete with Women's Institute choir and doggerel verse, of great moments from Britain's past such as the Armada and Waterloo. "You are living in the past", Ivan declares accusingly.

When he returns a year later, the War is on and the country has been galvanised into action. The shipyard is working overtime, Ann has joined the WRNS, and the Tisdalls are entertaining cockney evacuees. But they still find time to listen to Miss Beatrice Harrison playing the cello to the nightingales in the woods for the BBC, a cinematic recreation of something which did actually happen during the War. With Hitler's invasion of Russia, Ivan finds himself an ally of the British. The pageant is held, exactly the same as last year, except for a victory tableau, but it raises £1,000 for Ivan's home town and he finds himself applauding it. The shipyard workers work overtime to complete the ice-breaker and at its launching Ivan makes a speech, explaining how he arrived in England full of misconceptions but has discovered the secret of the English:

"Much of the world thinks you care only about money.

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> You care much more about cricket, nightingales . . . a good job well done. Much of the world thinks you are perfidious, hypocritical, but you are warm and kindly. The world thinks these things because *you* want it to. It pleases that dread sense of humour of yours. It is the guiding factor of your lives. Laugh at life and at yourselves and you must hate persecution, love decency and freedom. There is no laughter where there is no freedom. The people of Russia love to laugh, and will fight to the death rather than surrender their right to laugh. Today we are allies, friends. We must remain friends, fight together in years to come, and then laugh together in years after."

The speech brings together the ideas that have run through the film, defining the national identity: duty, service, tradition, tolerance, a sense of humour and an heroic individualism, which at its most potent can invent, explore and conquer, and at its most pronounced can blossom as a benign and lovable eccentricity (seen in the presence at the pageant of those most beloved of British eccentrics, Margaret Rutherford and Joyce Grenfell).

If in *The Demi-Paradise* England is epitomised by the town of Barchester and its inhabitants, in *This Happy Breed* England is Number 17, Sycamore Road, Clapham; and the backbone of England is the lower middle class. *This Happy Breed* (1944) was the play by Noël Coward filmed by the team he had assembled to make *In Which We Serve*: David Lean, Ronald Neame, and Anthony Havelock-Allan. Essentially a film about the past and the future, it avoided the War altogether, something which by 1944 cinema-goers were anxious to do. This Clapham cavalcade presents a selective view of the events of the period 1919-1939, intermingling the joys and sorrows of the Gibbons family, Frank and Ethel (beautifully played by Robert Newton and Celia Johnson) and their three children (marriages, births, deaths, quarrels and reconciliations), with the great events of the age (the General Strike, the Abdication, the Munich Crisis) in such a way as to assuage any guilt-feelings the lower middle class may have entertained about their endorsement of the National Government and its appeasement policy.

The film also makes a resounding statement about the British political process which is essentially a plea for continuity and a return to normalcy after the War. The younger members of the Gibbons clan flirt with innovation but settle for the tried and true. Son Reg and son-in-law Sam get involved in radical politics but are tamed and neutralised by marriage. Daughter Queenie rejects her background as "common" and runs away in search of the bright lights. She too eventually settles down, with faithful Bob from next door, and shows every sign of becoming the archetypal supportive wife and mother that Ethel has been. Frank expounds Coward's conservative evolutionary philosophy, based on the belief that "It's up to us ordinary people to keep things steady." This involves Frank and Ethel during the course of the film in breaking the General Strike, filing reverently past the coffin of King George V, denouncing appeasement, and rejecting both Communism and Fascism ("What works in other countries doesn't work here. We've got our own way of settling things. It may be slow and it may be a bit dull but it suits us all right and it always will.") In fact, only a year later Labour took Clapham from the Conservatives in the General Election and swept to power to ignite their peaceful revolution. But it was a peaceful revolution and one which grew out of trends and developments initiated by the War. It called for no change in the national character or self-image.

If, in real life, the happy breed turned to the Labour Party for their brave new world, they still recognised fellow souls in the Gibbons family. The film provoked a remarkable reaction. The critics enthusiastically endorsed it, *The Manchester Guardian* calling it "an essential photo for John Bull's family album"; more important, the public loved it. It was the top British money-maker of 1944, and C. A. Lejeune wrote:

> "This film about the suburbs has gone out into the suburbs and the suburbs have taken it to their hearts. All the Gibbonses in greater London have flocked to see themselves on the screen. . . . Nor is the enthusiasm for the film confined to Metroland. . . . No film in my memory has brought in more letters of appreciation."

It touched people because Coward was writing from the heart and highlighting what he saw as the distinctive assets of the British character: "Our individual honesty, our horse

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sense, our irrepressible humour and our strange power of adjustment to new circumstances." It conformed with the consensus about what made up the British character, a consensus which had emerged from the spate of books, essays and articles analysing Englishness, inspired by the War. In 1940, the former Conservative Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin published an essay entitled "The Englishman." The Socialist George Orwell wrote two essays on the subject, "The Lion and the Unicorn" (1942) and "The English People" (1944). The Anglophile American Leland DeWitt Baldwin (no relation to Stanley) wrote *God's Englishman* (1943), a study of British history in terms of the national character. There was remarkable unanimity among them. They saw the British character as composed of tolerance, decency, anti-intellectualism, insularity, a sense of duty, a sense of humour, a sense of fair play. Their typical Englishman was law-abiding, private, sentimental, a lover of home and garden, sport and animals. For Leland Baldwin, "respect for the individual" lay at the heart of the British character. For Stanley Baldwin, the defence of this individualism was central:

> "He will not be interfered with by his employer, his neighbour or on a greater scale by another nation. He is apt to resist at a point and when his mind is made up and his tenacity [is] acknowledged even by his enemies. You can lead him a long way; you cannot drive him an inch. He will neither cringe nor be bullied."

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THE QUALITIES DISCERNED by these writers and others like them can be seen to run through most of the wartime films and to transcend differences of class and circumstances. In the early War years, in films like *Night Train to Munich* and *Ships With Wings*, the qualities perceived as being national appeared to be largely confined to the upper class, who played the dominant part in the action. But as the other classes got their cinematic meed, in *The Way Ahead*, *Millions Like Us* and *Waterloo Road*, for instance, they were seen to share the national characteristics.

Three qualities in particular seem to assume a central importance in the definition of the national character. First, there is the sense of humour, a strong component even in serious war films. Ivan Kouznetsoff in *The Demi-Paradise* sees it as the key—a bulwark against tyranny. In *Pimpernel Smith*, the Gestapo Chief General Von Graum, having solemnly investigated "the English secret weapon—their sense of humour", declares it to be a myth. But Leslie Howard, spending the film outwitting, ridiculing and finally escaping him, triumphantly demonstrates not only its existence but its strength.

Second, there is tolerance, the only feasible stance to adopt in a nation with more than its fair share of individualists and eccentrics. In wartime, it had a vital political role to play, for only by mutual tolerance could the consensus necessary to fight the War be promoted. The task for the authorities was to reconcile individualism with the need for a corporate effort. As Professor F. C. Bartlett wrote in his *Political Propaganda* (1940), domestic propaganda must recognise

> "that men act where their affections, sentiments and emotions are engaged but that these must and can be led by intelligence without losing their strength. It knows that the stability of the social order does not depend upon everybody saying the same thing, holding the same opinions, feeling the same feelings, but upon a freely achieved unity, which with many sectional and individual differences, is nevertheless able to maintain an expanding and consistent pattern of life."

It is this consideration which lay behind the making of those films about people from different backgrounds and classes who are successfully welded together for the war effort, while retaining their individuality.[1] Notable examples of this form are *Millions Like Us* (women factory-workers), *The Gentle Sex* (the ATS), *The Way Ahead* (the conscript army), *Fires Were Started* and *The Bells Go Down* (the Auxiliary Fire Service).

The third quality is stoicism or emotional restraint, the essence of the much-parodied but widely recognised badges of Britishness: the stiff upper-lip and understatement. That these were seen as a key to Britain's survival, and a matter for admiration during the War, is evident from the critical reaction to the last great film of the War, *The Way to the Stars* (1945), an evocative account of life on an RAF base between 1940-1944, directed by Anthony Asquith and written by

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[1] *Civilians at War: Journals 1938-1946*. By GEORGE BEARDMORE. John Murray, £9.95. *One Family's War*. Edited by PATRICK MAYHEW. Hutchinson, £10.95.

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Terence Rattigan and Anatole de Grunwald. *Daily Mail* readers voted it the best film of the War years, it was a considerable box-office hit, and it was warmly welcomed by the critics, who almost universally praised it for the same qualities: its Britishness, its realism, and its emotional restraint. In a sense these three qualities can be equated, the one feeding directly into the other. *The Daily Sketch* spoke for all the critics when it said the film had "a close relation to reality . . . the story is credible, the characters true, the dialogue lifelike . . . and in all its admirable emotional restraint it is far more moving than any picture deliberately designed as a tear-jerker."

Whether there was or was not a British national character is less important than whether there was perceived to be one. During the War there was both in films and books a concerted effort to project a distinctive national character—the mythic Englishman.[2] But, as George Orwell sagely observed:

> "Myths which are believed in tend to become true, because they set up a type or persona which the average person will do his best to resemble . . . it is probable that the stolid behaviour of the British town populations under the bombing was partly due to the existence of the national 'persona'—that is, to their preconceived idea of themselves. Traditionally the Englishman is phlegmatic, unimaginative, not easily rattled; and since that is what he thinks he ought to be, that is what he tends to become. Dislike of hysteria and 'fuss', admiration for stubbornness, are all but universal, shared by everyone except the intelligentsia. Millions of English people willingly accept as their national emblem the bulldog, an animal noted for its obstinacy, ugliness and impenetrable stupidity. They have a remarkable readiness to admit that foreigners are more 'clever' than themselves, and yet they feel that it would be an outrage against the laws of God and Nature for England to be ruled by foreigners."

In the last resort, that is one of the reasons why Britain was not conquered.

[2] *National Fictions: World War II in British Films and Television.* Edited by GEOFF HEARD. British Film Institute, £3.75.

Military Leverage

On The "Secret" Services—By M. R. D. FOOT

A NEW BOOK by a general provides an overview of the brief but highly distinguished career of the army's most daring component, the Special Air Service Regiment.[1] It was founded in late July 1941 in Egypt, as L detachment of Layforce. Layforce was a group of desperadoes commanded by (Sir) Robert Laycock, officered largely from White's Club, trained in small boat and demolition work and in what came to be known as commando tactics. David Stirling, then a subaltern in the Scots Guards, was SAS's original inspirer (though General Anthony Deane-Drummond claims that he was in L detachment before Stirling). Stirling and his friend Jock Lewis got Laycock's leave to experiment with some parachutes that had turned up in the Near East by mistake, on their way elsewhere.

It suited Dudley Clarke, the genius who ran deception for General Wavell—both of them skilled at hiding their very bright lights under a bushel of apparent dumbness—to flesh out a notional unit in which he was trying to get the enemy to believe, called the 1st Special Air Service Brigade, with a few real parachutists. Stirling, leading from in front as all the best officers do, hurt his back in an early practice drop, and had leisure in hospital to work out what SAS's strategy should be.

He appreciated that a very few exceptionally highly trained men, inserted by clandestine means into the enemy's rear areas, could wreak an amount of havoc wholly disproportionate to their own numbers, and exercise a decisive impact on the main battle. A first attempt to use parachutes at work—from almost obsolete Bombay aircraft—was scattered by high winds; one aircraft force-landed, still carrying its parachutists, on an enemy airfield. Thereafter SAS travelled to their African targets, as a rule, in the jeeps or lorries of the Long Range Desert Group, and if they missed a lift back, walked. Corporal Sillitoe once walked a hundred desert miles without food or water: from their earliest days, SAS troops have been tough. The results were promising, even if they were not quite what Stirling had expected. Montgomery reckoned that SAS and LRDG together—then fewer than 500 men—were worth an extra division to him. SAS destroyed some 400 enemy aircraft, about a quarter of them at the hands of a single man, that incomparable Ulsterman Paddy Mayne who was four times awarded the DSO. (The highest-scoring pilot in RAF Fighter Command only shot down 38.)

The unit was brought home in 1944, and expanded into two regiments, each of some 450 men; thrown together, in an international brigade most unlike those that fought in Spain, with two regiments of Free French parachutists, an independent squadron of Belgians, and a Phantom squadron to provide the indispensable wireless links between home

[1] *Daring to Excel: A History of the SAS Regiment.* By JOHN STRAWSON. Secker & Warburg, £12.95.

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base and parties in the field. A total force of some 2,200 operated well behind the German lines during Operation *Overlord*, with effects that would have gladdened Stirling's heart had he known of them at the time. (He was by 1944 shut away in Colditz, where he was trying to teach his fellow prisoners-of-war how to overpower their guards in unarmed combat—a task they had the good fortune never to have to attempt.) Wherever SAS went—arriving, with RAF help, by air—in France and the Low Countries, it provided a steel core for local resistance and helped to deprive the Germans of control over their own rear areas. In northern Italy, several SAS parties combined with Italian partisans on similar tasks of raising local mayhem. The garrison of Norway, scores of thousands strong, surrendered in the end to young men in plain clothes wearing armbands, backed by fewer than a thousand SAS parachutists.

SAS's work was by no means done. There were enough strong men in it, and enough more senior men who knew what it could do, to keep it in being in the dour aftermath of the World War, and it has gone on proving its worth ever since: in Malaya, Borneo, Oman, Aden, central London, Ulster and the Falklands. Wherever it is secure to do so, Strawson illustrates how SAS did its work.

Only on a single point of fact do I want to join issue with him. It feels unsuitable for a territorial major, nearly forty years retired, to try to correct a regular major-general; but as Strawson remarks, SAS were often rude to generals (I remember a message from France that began GOD ROT GUBBINS GUTS), and the instance is worth making public.

PUBLICATION 30 MAY

A MIRROR FOR SOCIALISM

Soviet Criticisms of China

by GILBERT ROZMAN

This book analyses the Soviet debate on "What went wrong in China" and is the first extensive examination of Soviet writings on the subject. In the course of his exhaustive research the author has discovered how the issue of "China" is being used by Soviet officials and intellectuals as a vehicle for traditionalists and reformists to debate the future directions of Soviet socialism. An original and highly significant contribution to understanding the political trends within the Soviet Union and the Communist world.

"There is no doubt about the validity of the author's thesis ... he has gone back to the roots of this division and divergence of view between Soviet traditionalists and reformists ... Certainly an original work which conveys (Soviet specialists') views in a very responsible fashion."

Professor J. Erickson, FRSE, Director of Defence Studies at the University of Edinburgh

Gilbert Rozman is Professor of Sociology at Princeton University and his research work on the Soviet Union and China is highly respected.

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On the nights of D-1/D-Day, SAS carried out two small drops into Western Normandy, codenamed *Titanic*. Four were planned; only two took place, one midway between Rouen and Le Havre, the other near Isigny, a small town at the south-east corner of the Cherbourg peninsula. Each party of three or four parachutists, armed with Very pistols and firecrackers, was accompanied by 500 dummy soldiers, each dummy meant to self-destruct on landing. Their tasks were to simulate major airborne landings. Strawson thinks "Operation did not cause enemy to react." The commandant of Le Havre, we now know from the released *Enigma* decrypts, got a bad fright; more important, the same source tells us that the German general commanding the division that was about to be attacked at *Omaha* beach woke up his reserve brigade and dispatched it, at 3 a.m., to repel the landing near Isigny. That bridade spent the morning of D-Day beating the woods for an enemy who was not there, instead of pushing the diciest of the main seaborne landings back into the sea.

GENERAL STRAWSON has written a splendidly balanced account of what the regiment has achieved, flavouring it with enough local and personal detail to retain his readers' interest while always keeping in sight SAS's main object—to aid British strategy. In his view, it has now become a sort of secular arm, ready to provide armed support at moments of acute national danger. When, for example, the IRA gunmen holed up in Balcombe Street had it leaked to them that SAS marksmen were waiting outside for them to emerge, they gave up any pretence of continuing to fight. More broadly, SAS has shown over and over again how to attain two of the grand principles of strategy, dinned at staff colleges into students most of whom have forgotten them by the time they become great commanders: surprise, and economy of force. In this SAS resembles its wartime colleague and rival SOE, the Special Operations Executive, an even less popular body among stick-in-the-mud types in Whitehall. Strawson's book may indeed be compared with David Stafford's *Britain and European Resistance 1940-1945*, the fullest attempt so far published to tie SOE's work into the British Chiefs-of-Staff's plans for the general conduct of the war; of which a welcome paperback edition, lightly revised, appeared in 1983.

SOE's tasks were even more dangerous, and even more thankless, than SAS's. It collected characters as dogged as Corporal Sillitoe—think of Bill ("Marko") Hudson, who trudged through the Bosnian mountains all one winter almost alone—and as unstoppable as Paddy Mayne; think of Yeo-Thomas, "the White Rabbit", who escaped from Buchenwald. Unlike SAS, SOE employed women as well as men: Vera Atkins, a match for any male staff officer of any rank, or Violette Szabo, a brilliant markswoman who did not return from Ravensbrück. Both bodies were proscribed by the Gestapo, on Himmler's order; it took Rommel's personal intervention to save David Stirling's life when Stirling was captured in Tunisia. SAS at least appeared in the army list; SOE was inadmissible in wartime, and remained so—

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officially—for many years after it was wound up ("amalgamated with SIS" is Stafford's phrase) in 1946.

SAS had one advantage over SOE from a military, rather than a clandestine, point of view: superior discipline. Strawson, as a soldier, knows how important discipline is, and shows how in SAS it has developed into the highest kind of group reliability. Everyone in an SAS squad knows exactly the strengths and weaknesses of his fellows; everyone knows also which of them gives the orders, when any need to be given (no one in SAS gives an order he would not dare to carry out himself). SOE aimed at the same high standard, but was thrown together in such a hurry and at such a time of crisis that it was not always able to reach it. Time, not given to short-lived SOE, has enabled SAS to reach out for—and to attain—standards of excellence.

Some doubts remain, in the area that necessarily obsessed SOE, and is often vital for SAS too: politics. It has been well said that SOE could do nothing that was not political; can SAS? SOE for example sent parties into Albania in 1943-44, some of who armed and trained the Communist partisans they found there, and then had to watch the arms they had had dropped being used not against the Germans, but against the Communists' local enemies in an Albanian civil war. David Smiley, who like Bob Laycock moved into irregular warfare from the pre-War Household Cavalry, has given a marvellously vivid picture of what this felt like.[2] SAS in Malaya was working against Communists, many of whom were carrying SOE's weapons, some of whom had been trained by SOE's agents when Japan and not Great Britain had been the occupying power. SAS in Oman was working for the Sultan, and against his Communist-inspired opponents. In the Falkland Islands in 1982, the politics were reasonably clear-cut: there was a palpable aggressor, against whom SAS could and did bring off more prodigies of endurance. Yet for whom, against whom, should the SAS be operating in Ulster? Troops went back in in 1969 to hold the two local warring sides apart, in a struggle that goes back before 1916 to 1690, before 1690 to 1641, right back indeed to 1169. General Strawson, with great good sense, leaves Ulster out, on the ground that what SAS is doing there is a subject too delicate for current public debate.

NICHOLAS BETHELL IS LESS READY to shrink from sensation. He has got his teeth into the story of a series of clandestine operations into Albania, mounted in the late 1940s from Malta, with British and American Secret Service backing, by Albanian exiles from King Zog's entourage; all of whom came to prompt and horrible ends, while the pretence that they were making friends and influencing people was kept up by bogus wireless messages.[3] He identifies David Smiley among those who trained the exiles, and does not hesitate to put the bulk of the blame on Kim Philby.

Answers to this kind of problem are seldom simple. Just as SOE's catastrophe in the Netherlands in 1942-43 was not wholly the fault of its (admittedly grossly incompetent) *N* section in London, so the later Albanian disaster can be blamed largely, but not entirely, on Philby. Incompetence played its part as well as treachery, and few indeed are the captured fighting men who say absolutely nothing at all under enemy secret-police interrogation.

The problem of how far treachery can run inside a Secret Service, how far indeed it may be encouraged to run by senior men in the service who know it is there, and believe they can control it, is touched on in a slant and subtle way by David Mure, in a novel (or tract) that got far less attention than it deserved, perhaps because reviewers were put off by an awkward convention in the book, which names most of its characters out of Lewis Carroll's *Alice* and *The Hunting of the Snark*. *The Last Temptation*[5] is the purported autobiography of Guy Liddell, who failed to become head of MI5—because, Mure alleges, a Labour Minister remembered twenty years afterwards that Liddell had released to the press the Zinoviev letter—the document that decided the general election of 1924 against both Labour and Liberal parties. Liddell, Mure claims, let Burgess, Maclean and Philby riot away because Burgess knew so many disreputable secrets, and Great Britain's—or at least MI5's—best interests demanded that the Russians should not feel themselves too much cold-shouldered.

Nobody should suppose the Russians neglect these subjects. They too have SAS-type squads under training, and plenty of friends in countries hostile to themselves who help to look out suitable targets for SAS-style coups. Burgess and Maclean are dead, as dead as Anthony Blunt; but the Russians still have at their elbow Philby, to advise them on how the British organise Secret Services and secret operations. MI5 did in the end spot Maclean, and not all the data he supplied for the Russians are quite above suspicion. Let us hope that somebody in the Lubianka is rubbing his chin and wondering whether even Philby can quite be trusted, after all.

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[2] *Albanian Assignment*. By DAVID SMILEY. Chatto & Windus, £12.95.

[3] *The Great Betrayal*. By NICHOLAS BETHELL. Hodder and Stoughton, £9.95.

[4] *The Last Temptation*. By DAVID MURE. Buchan & Enright, £8.95.

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Books Encountered

Leslie Stephen: The Godless Victorian. By NOEL ANNAN. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £16.50.

A revised and expanded edition of Lord Annan's sane, mellifluous 1951 study of "the dominant in Victorian tonality"—less a biography than a history of ideas.

James Boswell: The Later Years 1769-1795. By FRANK BRADY. Heinemann, £20.

The completion, by the chairman of the editorial committee, Yale Boswell Editions, of the definitive biography begun with him by Frederick A. Pottle—a good companion to the journals and the *Life of Johnson*.

The Kennedys. By PETER COLLIER and DAVID HOROWITZ. Secker & Warburg, £12.50.

Did somebody say "*Dallas*"? There's a touch of the series about this all-you-need-to-know-and-probably-more-than-you-want book on the JFK clan; but where's the political assessment?

Neville Chamberlain: Volume I 1869-1929. By DAVID DILKS. Cambridge University Press, £20.

Crisply written by the Professor of International History at Leeds, this might have been subtitled "The Forgotten Years", and might seem fusty; but it reveals the busy younger self of the man of Munich, plus brilliant sketches of his colleagues.

Austen Chamberlain: Gentleman in Politics. By DAVID DUTTON. Ross Anderson Publications, £14.95.

Lecturer in modern history at the University of Liverpool, Dr Dutton has drawn the short straw of the Chamberlain half-brothers. But he makes creditable bricks, implying that in every sense Austen was too well-groomed for politics.

Auden in Love. By DOROTHY J. FARNAN. Faber, £9.95. Gossipy, uncritical study, by his youthful stepmother (!), of Chester Kallman—"half angel, half changeling", W. H. Auden's companion.

Dorothy Wordsworth. By ROBERT GITTINGS and JO MANTON. Oxford University Press, £12.50.

A charming, scholarly, and kindly biography by Robert Gittings and his wife, leaning heavily on Dorothy's *Journal* and the *Letters*. It may make up for the BBC's radio burlesque *The Wordsmiths at Gorsemere*, and should sell well at Dove Cottage.

Lloyd George: From Peace to War 1912-1916. By JOHN GRIGG. Methuen, £19.95.

Volume III of another blockbuster, with more to come. A rounded portrait, showing again how war can bring out the best in the most equivocal of men.

The House of Mitford. By JONATHAN GUINNESS with CATHERINE GUINNESS. Hutchinson, £12.95.

Two hundred pages on ancestors and parents may be too much for those interested in Nancy and her siblings, including Diana (later Mosley, and the main author's mother). But the chronicle substantiates all that headstrong energy, without undue family piety.

Iacocca: An Autobiography. By LEE IACOCCA with WILLIAM NOVAK. Sidgwick & Jackson, £12.95.

The subtitle's presumably a joke. This as-orated-to life-story of the man who rescued Chrysler is full of the immigrant-to-affluent work ethic that "made this country great." Heavens! Maybe the man's right.

Invented Lives: F. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald. By JAMES R. MELLOW. Souvenir Press, £15.95.

What—more about that precious pair? Yes, and some of it new: an affair of Scott's, more understanding of Zelda. Mr Mellow usefully disentangles fact from Fitzgerald's fictions, but sadly shirks evaluation.

Hugh Dalton. By BEN PIMLOTT. Jonathan Cape, £25.

The author's a lecturer in politics at Birkbeck College, University of London, and approaches Dalton with political sympathy. The resultant portrait remains unflattering. Titbit: Dalton's lovelorn affection for Rupert Brooke. Two volumes of diaries are threatened.

Frost: A Literary Life Reconsidered. By WILLIAM H. PRITCHARD. Oxford University Press, £14.95.

A largely successful attempt to still the wild pendulum of Robert Frost's reputation, concentrating on fresh reading of the poems within the life. Professor Pritchard eschews chiding, perhaps unduly: yet the old devil shows through.

Chaplin: His Life and Art. By DAVID ROBINSON. Collins, £15.

The long-awaited, probably definitive biography, best on childhood and film-making, rather deferential towards the end. Chaplin wasn't Jewish, but gypsy; he wasn't Communist or Anarchist, but an individualist; he had many affairs, but didn't father Joan Barry's baby. And his *Autobiography*'s reliable.

Diaries 1923-1925. By SIEGFRIED SASSOON. Edited and introduced by RUPERT HART-DAVIS. Faber, £12.95.

Private, personal, dissatisfied, self-critical, these diaries have the fascination of other people's solitude. Beerbohm, Bridges, Forster, Gosse, Graves, Hardy, Lawrence (mainly T. E.), the Morrells, and H. G. Wells flit through. The real problem is being typecast as a War Poet.

R.M.

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Karl Popper & the Jazz Age

By D. C. Stove

"The world has gone mad today,
And good's bad today . . . ."
COLE PORTER, **Anything Goes**

"Irrefutability is not a virtue of a theory (as people often think) but a vice."
KARL POPPER, **Conjectures and Refutations**

I HAVE HEARD a Marxist "explain" Darwin's theory of sexual selection as being just a "reflection" of middle-class Victorian courtship-practices. Nowadays, of course, this kind of thing is all the rage: I mean, pretending to explain the currency of a scientific theory, or a philosophy, by reference just to the historical circumstances of its origin, especially the "class origins" of its propounder or adherents.

It is a stupid and discreditable business. To talk about Darwin as though he were some simple mechanical toy is discreditable, unless your mental powers happen to be much superior to his: a condition seldom satisfied by anyone, and never, one may safely say, by Marxists. And in this particular case the business was so stupid as to be embarrassing, since other middle-class Victorian naturalists, including some of the most Darwinian, denied the very existence of sexual selection. The stupidity common to all such "explanations" is, of course, simply that of proceeding as though the *merits* of a theory—such things as truth, or probability, or explanatory power—could not possibly be among the reasons for its currency.

Sometimes, of course, and to some extent, you *do* need to refer to social circumstances, in order to explain the currency, or the origin, of a theory. You are more likely to need to do so, needless to say, the less merit the theory has: Lysenko's biology is a conspicuous case in science. And you are more likely to need to do so for a philosophy than for a scientific theory: Hegel's political philosophy is an obvious example. In either of these instances, it would be absurd to deny that social circumstances had a great deal to do with the origin, and the currency, of the theory.

A similar instance is Sir Karl Popper's philosophy of science.

WE HAVE FROM Popper's own hand a brief but illuminating account of the social circumstances in which his philosophy was born.[1] The place was Vienna, where Popper was a university student. The time was that great watershed of our century, the years immediately after the First World War. The social circumstances were—well, "the world turned upside down."

In Austria the defeat of the Central Powers brought about the overturning of authority in almost every form: political, moral, religious, and financial. As the old structures dissolved almost overnight, Marxism, Anarchism, Freudianism, Dadaism—any ism, so long as it promised a Great Reversal—competed, not only for the minds of the young, but for government. A bewildered bohemian, who had never controlled so much as a horse in his life, might wake to find the reins of office in his hands. Nor was the Austro-Hungarian empire the only one to crack up at this time. For the mind of the young Karl Popper, the fall of another and far more soundly-based empire was no less formative: I mean the Newtonian empire in physics. In art, Western Europe found that its anti-academy had become its academy "even in the twinkling of an eye." The galleries were suddenly full of the art of African societies, formerly the most despised. Victorian architecture was all at once the object of a universal detestation or, rather, horror. Negroid music began its long and excruciating revenge on the white man. The Jazz Age, in short, had arrived.

Cole Porter's words "Anything Goes" are not quite right for this situation, though; for they suggest *random* change, or anarchy. He is nearer the mark with "day's night today . . . good's bad today", for these words convey the idea of *reversal*

[1] The best short account by Karl Popper of his philosophy of science is an article which was first published in 1957 but later republished, under the title "Science: Conjectures and Refutations", in Popper's book *Conjectures and Refutations: The Growth of Scientific Knowledge* (Routledge, 1963). This article also contains the brief autobiographical account. The book by which Popper first made his mark was *Logik der Forschung* (Vienna, 1934, although the title-page says 1935), translated into English as *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* (Hutchinson, 1959).

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rather than of random change. Of course it is often not easy to keep the two ideas separated in one's mind. Even the prophet Isaiah, when he says that "every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill made low", is open to the suspicion of being not quite clear in his own mind as to whether he is promising us a plain, or only new mountains where valleys were before. Still, the two ideas really are distinct, and it is the idea of reversal, rather than that of random change, which is the key to the Jazz Age. It is also, I suggest, the key to Popper's philosophy of science.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN the propositions of science, on the one hand, and the speculations of philosophy, religion, and pseudo-science on the other, has always been felt strongly enough. But what exactly *is* the difference? According to long-standing philosophical tradition (as also according to common sense), the difference is that the propositions of science are *verifiable*. On this point even the Logical Positivists, who were certainly revolutionary enough in other respects (and who came to constitute Popper's main philosophical environment), agreed with everyone else. Very well then: Popper would say that the distinguishing mark of scientific propositions is that they are *falsifiable*.

The main stream of philosophy, at least since Bacon, had always maintained (and here again the Logical Positivists agreed) that the method of science is essentially *inductive*. We infer the future from the past; the unobserved (and perhaps unobservable) from what is observed; and in general the unknown from the known. Popper would maintain that we do not and cannot infer the unobserved from the observed; that in science we always infer the known from the unknown; that the method of science is entirely *deductive*.

Caution is of the essence of science, everyone used to say. So Popper said that *audacity* is of the essence of science, and that, of two theories equal in other respects, the bolder is the better.

Science was supposed to be distinguished from guesswork, and from everyday opinion, by the fact that its conclusions are *certain*, final, irrefutable. Newton's boast that he never meddled with hypotheses (*"Hypotheses non fingo"*) was supposed to express the scientific ideal. Popper would say that the conclusions of science are never more than guesswork, hypotheses, conjectures; that not meddling with hypotheses is an ideal impossible to achieve and pernicious even to aim at; and (as in the epigraph above) that irrefutability in a theory is *not a virtue but a vice*.

Conventional philosophy of science, in a more cautious variant, said that scientific conclusions are never actually certain, but have a vast preponderance of *probability* in their favour. So Popper said that no scientific conclusion can ever be probable; that no theory ever becomes even *more* probable, when evidence in its favour is discovered, than it was beforehand; and indeed that every scientific theory not only begins by being *infinitely improbable*, but must always remain so.

It would be easy to give still more examples, but the foregoing will probably suffice as a sample of central early-Popper opinions. In any case the reader, even one previously ignorant of Popperism, will by now have grasped its implicit rule, and can churn out other examples for himself for as long as that kind of thing amuses him. A Freudian might see (or imagine he sees) something more than "adolescent revolt", something actually pathological, in Popper's compulsion to *reverse* things. At present I merely point out that the central parts of Popper's philosophy do exhibit this pattern. I say nothing, here or elsewhere in this article, about any part of Popper's philosophy which is either later or less central than the parts which have just been mentioned. My concern is only with central and early Popperism; for it was by that "the West was won."

And won it was, with ridiculous ease. Indeed, the reception of a philosophy so congenial to the Jazz Age could never have been in doubt. Popper began to publish it in 1934; and his shocking reversals of received ideas were greedily taken up by an entire generation, almost faster than he could write them down. His career flourished almost equally quickly. Having left Europe as a refugee a little before the Second World War, he was by the end of the War a Reader, soon Professor, in Logic and Scientific Method at the University of London. By 1950 he was easily the most influential philosopher of science in the West. Thousands had undergone at his hands a "transvaluation of all values" which turned their inherited ideas of scientific virtues into vices, and vice versa (just as Cole Porter's song says).

Nor was it only philosophers who underwent the Popperite conversion-experience. Far from it: a gospel so much in keeping with the spirit of the age could never have been confined to that tiny audience. Popper's philosophy of science reached almost the entire educated public. Most striking of all, it reached scientists themselves. Scientists almost always find what philosophers write about science either incomprehensible, or superficial, or ridiculous. But Popper's philosophy of science was modelled so closely on the history of science, and in particular on its 20th-century history, that many scientists, on reading it, felt an agreeable "shock of recognition." Science as they knew it from the inside was far more like a series of "conjectures and refutations" than that accumulation of certainties which was implied by the textbooks, and by old-fashioned histories of science. As a result, Popper's most ardent admirers came to include a number of Nobel-prize winners in science; and even at the present day, if you scratch a scientist of middle age or older, you are almost certain to meet with a philosophy of science which consists of half-remembered scraps of Popperism. (The idea that a theory is not scientific unless it is "refutable" is an especial favourite.) This is true fame, and other philosophers of science can only mournfully envy it.

SINCE 1950 POPPER'S FAME has done nothing but increase. In philosophy he is now the acknowledged "grand old man" in Britain; the recipient of academic honours innumerable; a knight, a Companion of Honour, etc. His pen has lost nothing of its former facility; if anything, the reverse. Gigantic volumes, interspersed with *petits riens*, still pour from his desk; and publishers, who know a good thing when they see

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it, will crawl over broken bottles to get their hands on them. No philosophical writer could possibly expect to arrive, in his own lifetime, at a situation more agreeable.

But that is only socially speaking. Intellectually speaking—that is, in the philosophy of science itself—the present situation must seem to Popper to be, as indeed it is, a "city of dreadful night." The reason lies in that old story about Pandora's box, or the genie who refuses to go back into his bottle. It is one thing to start a revolution, in philosophy or anywhere else, and quite another thing to control it. The Jazz Age turned out to possess a hideous strength, which no one had foreseen, in philosophy as well as in music. And in the one case as in the other, the beginnings seem now to belong to an age of innocence almost inconceivably remote.

From Lakatos to Kuhn to Feyerabend

ONE OF THE FEW topics on which Popper did not see his way to a reversal of conventional opinions was mathematics. There, at least, the "accumulation-of-certainties" story seemed to be just plain right, and Popper had reconciled himself to agreeing, for once with, the Logical Positivists. In consequence, he had never had much to say about mathematics.

It was a bolt from the blue, therefore (though a very pleasant one), when one of his disciples appeared to extend the Popperite sway to this previously unconquered province. This was Imre Lakatos, who in 1963-64 published a long series of articles in which he documented, in microscopic detail, the vicissitudes which a particular geometrical proposition had undergone in the 18th and 19th centuries: vicissitudes of refutation, qualification, refutation again, re-interpretation, refutation yet again. . . .[2]

The effect of these articles was sensational at first. Mathematics, it turned out, was just as much a matter of "conjectures and refutations" as empirical science! It must have been music to Popper's ears. What master could resist an industrious apprentice who showed that he was even more right, or right over an even wider area, than he himself had realised? In 1969, when the time came for Karl Popper to retire from the London chair, Imré Lakatos got the job.

Yet his gift to Popper was but a Greek one after all, and might have been detected as such even at the time. The propositions of mathematics are of a fundamentally different nature from those of empirical science, and are known in a different way: so most philosophers have always believed, and so most of them found themselves still believing, when the initial impact of Lakatos's articles had worn off. If the *history* of mathematics is not basically different from the *history* of empirical science, then that only shows—this was the longer-term reaction, and was bound to be so—that history is one thing, and philosophy, whether of mathematical or empirical science, is quite another. Popper's critics had all along accused him, and with good cause, of drowning the philosophy of science in the history of science: of pretending to resolve questions of *logical value* by appealing to matters of *historical fact*. The sole long-term effect, therefore, of Lakatos's rash venture into mathematics was to add irresistible weight to this old criticism. It was the Sicilian Expedition of Popperism; intended to add a mighty new province to the empire, it fatally recoiled on the seat of empire itself.

Popper was not long in concluding that, both intellectually and personally, he had taken an asp to his bosom. Once safely installed in his chair, Lakatos turned his attention to empirical science, and did not leave his master's doctrine there undisturbed. He did not deny—no one has ever denied—the elementary asymmetry which Popper, with "a damnable iteration", had insisted upon: that while "All crows are black", say, cannot be verified by any number of black crows, a single crow of any other colour suffices to falsify it. Lakatos merely insisted—and Popper was in no position to question its relevance—that in the history of actual science such neat and decisive falsifications never in fact occur. Nor could they, Lakatos argued. Popper had said that Marxism, Freudianism, astrology, etc., are pseudo-sciences, because their central propositions are "unfalsifiable": that is, consistent with *every* report of an actual or possible observation. But then, Lakatos pointed out, Newtonian physics too is unfalsifiable in that sense; and so is every other typical scientific theory.

THIS IS TRUE, and it was "a very palpable hit." But it also left Lakatos with a daunting task, by way of reconstructing Popperite philosophy of science. For Lakatos, it must be understood, remained at bottom a loyal-enough Popperite. (I do not mean loyal enough to satisfy Popper: no one is that.) He could never bring himself to question the basic tenets of the school, such as the worthlessness of induction. He was also resolved, again like Popper, to model his philosophy of science on the actual history of science; only he would be more faithful to history than Popper had been. Within these two Popperite constraints—fidelity to "hypothetico-deductivism" and to the history of science—Lakatos faced the task of distinguishing good science from bad. But even before that, and more urgently, he faced the task of distinguishing between science and non-science. For without this there would be, obviously, nothing to distinguish a Karl-Popperish philosophy of science from a Cole-Porterish one, according to which anything goes.

The result was Lakatos's theory of research programmes. I will not enter into any details about this. When every allowance has been made for its author's early death, it must be said that, as an answer to either of the two questions which Lakatos had set himself, this theory is extraordinarily

[2] Imre Lakatos published no book, but his 1963-64 articles on mathematics were posthumously published as a book: *Proofs and Refutations* (Cambridge University Press, 1976). For his philosophy of empirical science, see *The Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes*, which is Vol. I of his *Philosophical Papers*, ed. Worrall and Currie (Cambridge University Press, 1978).

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unconvincing. It does not appear to have convinced even Lakatos himself. To the question, *"What distinguishes science from other things?"*, Popper had given an answer which, however wide of the mark, was at least definite. Lakatos's answer is hopelessly indefinite; or, rather, he gives no answer at all. The question is a philosophical one, but Lakatos, in his attempt to answer it, loses both himself and his readers in impenetrable thickets of detailed history of science. Worse still, he confesses that in some instances he has simply made up the historical details himself: a proceeding which manages to be scandalous and pointless at the same time.

NOT THAT IT WOULD have mattered much anyway; for even while he wrote, Lakatos had been outmanoeuvred on one philosophical flank by an historian of science far more formidable than himself. Thomas Kuhn is an American who made a great reputation by his early study of the Copernican revolution in astronomy. He was never a Popperite *dévot*. (Popperism is almost exclusively a, or rather *the*, British addiction in philosophy.) He simply picked up from the surrounding air a sufficiently lethal dose of Popperite radiation, as others have done who are "as the sands of the sea for multitude."

We have Kuhn's own testimony in print to his agreement with "anti-inductivism" and other central points of Popperism. When he turned philosopher of science in his own right, in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*,[3] the effect was enormous. This book has sold well over half a million copies in the English edition alone, and has been translated into innumerable languages. Even among philosophers, who are a notably resistant strain of people, not a few have succumbed, or (if the jargon of the profession can be permitted) "gone Kuhn." In the intellectual slums, where resistance of any kind is weak—among sociologists, educationalists, anthropologists, and the like—the execution done by this book has been simply terrific. What is more important, the book has been and still is being read, with the effects to be expected, by scientists in their thousands.

Kuhn claims to have detected a certain cycle in the history of science. First there is a "pre-paradigm" stage, when a chaos of facts overwhelms all students, theories proliferate but no theory wins, one man's solution is another man's problem, and so on. Then a paradigm, some acknowledged model of how things should be done, emerges. It is usually, though not necessarily, a book, such as Darwin's *Origin*, Newton's *Principia*, or Copernicus's *De Revolutionibus*.

The paradigm imposes an intelligible order on the welter of known facts, solves some problems decisively, and indicates the lines along which many others will be able to be solved. Guided by the paradigm, scientists mop up the problem-areas: this is the period of what Kuhn calls "normal science." Sooner or later, however, difficulties accumulate on the successful paradigm, like barnacles and weed on a ship's hull: "anomalies" multiply. When this process has reached a sufficiently serious point, and if (though only if) a new paradigm offers itself, you have a period of "paradigm-shift" and "revolutionary science." Young scientists desert the old paradigm for the new, like rats deserting a ship which, though it is not yet actually sinking, they somehow know is doomed. The new paradigm triumphs, a new period of normal science begins, and . . . away we go again.

Now you could, of course, take all this just as an account of the history of science, and find more or less of value in it, according as you consider it more or less accurate history. But that is not at all how it is intended to be taken, or how Kuhn himself takes it. He takes it as a sufficient reason to accept a certain *philosophy* of science, and a philosophy of the most uncompromisingly relativist kind. He will not talk himself, or let you talk if he can help it, of *truth* in science, or (and this galls the Popperites even more) of falsity: he claims he "cannot understand" that class of talk. (You have to be very learned indeed to find things as hard to understand as Kuhn does.)

As for "knowledge", "discovery", "progress": why, all that, of course, is no more than the language which the partisans of *any* paradigm will apply to their own activities. It is no more to be taken at face-value than is talk about "reforms" in politics: after all, whenever *your* bunch gets its way on some political point, you call the result a "reform." Or, as Kuhn puts it in his more demure way, all such talk is "paradigm-relative." There is nothing *rational* about paradigm-shift in science, according to Kuhn. He constantly compares it to what psychologists call "*gestalt*-switch": that non-rational process by which a drawing of an ascending flight of stairs is suddenly seen as a descending one, or what the moment before seemed only shrubbery is seen as a human face. That kind of thing is what the history of science comes down to, notwithstanding all the Whiggish rhetoric of the past few centuries about progress and enlightenment.

KUHN IN HIS TURN has been outflanked by a philosopher in whom the Jazz Age has finally come to full fruition: P. K. Feyerabend. He was at one stage a convert to Popperism, but got deconverted; and he now exhibits something of the animus of the ex-seminarian: insults Sir Karl's wife in print, calls for the dismissal of the London philosophers, etc. His loss of faith was helped by the work of Thomas Kuhn and Imre Lakatos, but even more by his own increasing sense of the authoritarianism of Popper: not just the style but the stuff. Feyerabend calls himself a "Dadaist" and his philosophy "epistemological anarchism." He maintains that science knows, and should know, *no* rules of method, no logic—inductive, deductive, or whatever. And for his slogan he actually chose (and still defends against all comers) Cole Porter's old title *Anything Goes*!

Feyerabend's main manifesto is a book called *Against Method*.[4] Of all the productions of the human mind in any age, this must rank as one of the most curious. It is impossible to convey briefly the unique absurdity of the book, but one or

[3] T. S. Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago University Press) was first published in 1962. What is nowadays usually seen is the second edition, enlarged, of 1970.

[4] P. K. Feyerabend, *Against Method* (New Left Books, 1975).

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two of the author's foibles may be mentioned. Feyerabend says—not as a joke or schoolboyish pun on the word "laws", but in all seriousness—that scientific laws ought to be decided in the way that other laws are decided in an open society: by a democratic vote. He is also a sturdy partisan of the claims of witchcraft, voodoo, and astrology, and does not refuse his countenance even to Carlos Castaneda, the dubious and enigmatic author of the "Don Juan" books. Feyerabend is a professor in (of course) California, and is one of the highest-paid philosophers in the world. His collected papers are now being published by Cambridge University, the university of Newton and Darwin.

IT IS THESE THREE WRITERS, Lakatos, Kuhn, and Feyerabend, who now dominate the scene in the philosophy of science. Thus, if we take a representative recent textbook, such as A. F. Chalmers' *What is This Thing Called Science?* (1978), we find that it is these three writers who engage the author's interest almost exclusively. Popper is often mentioned, but he figures chiefly as a worthy if insufferable forerunner, worth perhaps six-out-of-ten for trying. The very title of this book speaks volumes. It has the true Feyerabendian ring—a combination of levity and menace. (Even the drawing of a kitten on the paperback cover has, for Feyerabend-adepts, a meaning.) And, of course, the title also brings us back to Cole Porter (*What Is This Thing Called Love?)*. These conjunctures are, as the Marxists say, no accident: deep calls to deep.

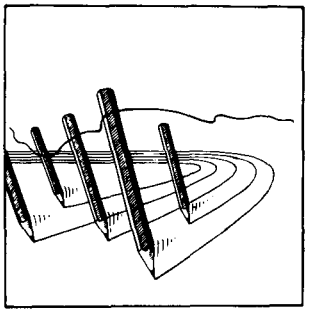
Popper, as I have intimated, regards the philosophy of Lakatos, Kuhn, and Feyerabend in the way that anyone should: with hatred, ridicule, and contempt. Any suggestion that he himself might be, for all that, the begetter of it, he rejects with boundless indignation.[5] But then, of course, this is a form of astigmatism exceedingly common in fathers—Dostoevsky's Verkhovensky *père* could not for the life of him see how he could have been responsible for Verkhovensky *fils*. But other people can see a short and simple causal chain when it is before their eyes, and in the present case Popper's paternity cannot seriously be disputed.

Lakatos, Kuhn, and Feyerabend are philosophers, like Popper himself, in the broad main stream of *empiricism*: they agree that we cannot learn anything about the actual universe except by experience. Who was it who taught them, then, that we cannot learn anything about the actual universe *even by experience*—that is, that induction is worthless? Popper, of course. You have only to put these two propositions together to reach the conclusion that we cannot learn anything about the actual universe at all. Yet when Lakatos, Kuhn, and Feyerabend arrive (gleefully or otherwise) at the same conclusion, Popper is outraged.

THE NIHILIST OR irrationalist nature of such a philosophy of science is by now pretty much an open secret. But how was the secret kept for so long? For nearly forty years, after all, Popperism succeeded in passing for something very different, and Popper himself, in particular, passed for the arch-enemy of irrationalism. How did this extraordinary confusion come about?

Not, of course, deliberately; philosophers are not like that. They do not produce delusions in others, without first being in the grip of delusions themselves. The deception I speak of was brought about by a certain abuse of language which Popper and his followers engaged in on an enormous scale.[6] The abuse undoubtedly imposed on the writers themselves, as well as on their readers; though it would have been of no importance, of course, had it imposed only on the writers.

Neutralising Success-Words



SOME WORDS are *success-words*, and others are not. "Seek", for example, is not. You can seek something unsuccessfully, and you can even seek what does not exist. "Find", on the other hand, is a success-word: you cannot find something unsuccessfully, and you can find only what exists. Again, "prove" is a success-word, while "believe", for example, is not: you can prove only what is true, but you can believe what is not true. "Refuted" (the verb) is a success-word, since it means "proved the falsity of"; "denied" is not, since it means only "asserted the falsity of." And so on.

But a success-word can be used in such a way, or in such a setting of other words, that its implication of success is cancelled or "*neutralised*." One way to neutralise a success-word is to put inverted commas around it: as in "The Minister 'refuted' allegations that he had misled Parliament." Another way is *bald-neutralising*: using a success-word as though it had no implication of success. Where this is done conspicuously and deliberately, the result is usually a joke: as in Mark Twain's objection to a certain young man, which was "not so much all the things he don't know, as all the things he do know, that ain't so." But bald-neutralising is usually done unconsciously, through ignorance, forgetfulness, or disregard of the meaning of the success-word. It is through mere ignorance, for example, that Australian or American journalists often baldly-neutralise the success-word "refuted." They will write "The Minister refuted the allegations", when all they really mean is that he denied them.

"Knowledge", of course, is a success-word: you can know

[5] Feyerabend, Kuhn, Lakatos, and Popper can all be found, discussing their agreements but still more (naturally) their disagreements, in *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge* (ed. Lakatos and Musgrave, Cambridge University Press, 1970).

[6] On the use of language by these philosophers, see my *Popper and After: Four Modern Irrationalists* (Pergamon Press, Oxford, 1982); also my article, "How Popper's Philosophy Began", *Philosophy* (1982).

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only what is true. So is "discovery": you can discover only what exists. So is "explanation": you cannot explain the sun's rising in the west, for example, or explain anything except what is the case. These are facts, trivial in themselves, about the meanings of some words. They are no more important in themselves than the fact that you can be married only to your spouse.

But "knowledge", "discovery", and the like, are important words, in fact absolutely indispensable, if you want to write about the history or the philosophy of science. Imagine trying to write on these subjects without ever using these or other success-words! Ridiculous. You can easily, in fact very easily, do without success-words if you are writing about, say, the Procession of the Holy Ghost; but not if you are writing about the precession of equinoxes. You do not need such words in writing the history of palmistry; in writing the history of chemistry, you do. Very well: Popper and the Popperites were obliged to use these words as freely as everyone else does who writes on the history or the philosophy of science. But there was a problem: these words are *success*-words, while Popperite philosophy abhors the very idea of scientific success, and implies that there never has been, or could be, any knowledge or discovery at all. SOLUTION: you cannot do without the old success-words, so use them indeed, but *neutralise* them.

AND THIS IS WHAT Popper, and Lakatos, Kuhn, and Feyerabend following him, duly did. Not absolutely all the time, of course—that would have drawn the readers' attention, and their own, to the abuse of language which was going on—but often enough to make neutralised occurrences of words like "knowledge" and "discovery" their unfailing literary trade-mark.

The quotation-mark was Lakatos's main weapon for abolishing scientific success. He nearly always writes " 'proof' " for "proof", " 'fact' " for "fact", and so on. Popper and the others do a certain amount of this, but they rely more on bald-neutralising. Thus Kuhn, for example, has Galileo *discovering* things which in the same sentence Kuhn tells us do not exist. Popper is the master of this art, as he was the teacher of it to the others. Take for example the phrase "conjectural knowledge", a coinage of his own to which he attaches great importance. The phrase is nonsense, since knowledge is of something known to be true, while something is conjectural only if it is not known to be true. Never mind: how many readers nowadays are capable of recognising a solecism when they meet one? And even if they recognise it, how many citizens of our Jazz Age will dare object to it? Anything goes. A writer, once he has got his readers to submit to such a phrase as this one, can be confident of getting away with anything. The phrase "conjectural knowledge", Popper tells us, contains in a nutshell the "solution to the problem of induction." Well, no doubt it does, in a way, and the solution of every other problem too. For what problem could there be, so hard as not to dissolve in a sufficiently strong solution of nonsense?

BY USING THE OLD Whiggish success-words, you conciliate the optimistic delusions of your readers (and yourself) about science; by neutralising those words, you undermine those delusions. Nothing could have been better suited to Popperite purposes, therefore, than the process of neutralising success-words in writing about science. Much more than that, however: it was out of an instance of this very process that Popper's philosophy first arose.

It arose, as Popper tells us, from a new insight into the nature of scientific propositions: that the mark of a non-scientific proposition is unfalsifiability. By this new word, *"unfalsifiable"*, he meant (as he said from the start) "consistent with every observation-statement." But, also from the start, he more often expressed his new insight by speaking (as in the epigraph at the beginning of this article) of *irrefutability*, rather than of unfalsifiability. He has always written, in fact, as though "irrefutable" means the same, or near enough the same, as "unfalsifiable."

But of course it does not. "Irrefutable" is a success-word. It means "indisputable" . . . "incontrovertible" . . . "certain" in the sense of "known for certain": it therefore entails "true." But "unfalsifiable" does not entail "true": a fact which Popper himself emphasised. (A proposition can easily be consistent with every observation-statement, yet not true: for example, "Fairies exist.") Hence to use "irrefutable" as Popper does, as though it meant the same as "unfalsifiable", is to neutralise the success-word "irrefutable."

This instance of neutralisation was absolutely indispensable to Popper. The germ from which his entire philosophy of science grew was not the dictum that unfalsifiability is a vice not a virtue in a theory, but the dictum that *irrefutability* is a vice not a virtue in a theory. People might not have been convinced by being told that *unfalsifiability* is a vice not a virtue but, at any rate, they could not possibly have been shocked, for no one before Popper had ever thought at all about that property, of being consistent with every observation-statement. (The property is, indeed, a very uninteresting one, being common to almost all propositions.) But tell people instead that *irrefutability* is a vice not a virtue in a theory, and you have at once the element of shocking reversal which the Jazz Age demanded, and which Popper somehow never failed to supply. The shock is due to one of the strongest success-words, "irrefutable", being baldly or, rather, violently neutralised.

It is an understatement, of course, to say that *"irrefutable"* and *"unfalsifiable"* do not mean the same. Since the former means "known for certain", and the latter means "consistent with every observation-statement", there is quite obviously no connection between the meanings of the two words. They are no more related in meaning than, say, "weighty", in "weighty thinker", and "overweight." Anyone who identified weighty thinkers with overweight thinkers, and took himself to have gained a new insight into the nature of thinkers, would be guilty of an outlandish enough pun. Someone who identifies irrefutable propositions with unfalsifiable ones, and takes himself to have gained a new insight into the nature of scientific propositions, is guilty of something not very much better.

Ignorant people suppose that a philosopher rises to fame by

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having deep thoughts, but, in the Jazz Age at least, there are other routes which will do quite as well. One is pitiless repetition of a pun, and a general willingness to use words with a blithe disregard for their meaning.[7]

Quotation Marks & Smile-Words

HOW CAN ANYONE ever have mistaken "unfalsifiable" and "irrefutable" for synonyms? Well, "unfalsifiable" was a new word, and it is often hard to keep a firm grip on what a new word means, even if it has been carefully explained. But the reason, I suspect, lay more at the other end, with "irrefutable." During the Jazz Age, people's grip on the meaning of this word and of others like it has been loosened, by a process which I call "ironisation.'

Some words are born ironic: for example, the colloquial-English "know-all" ("know-it-all" in American). For this word means, and always has meant, a person who does *not* know everything, but thinks or tends to think he does. What I call ironisation is a word's *becoming* ironic. "Enthusiast" is an example. This word means literally, and originally meant, one who is possessed by a god or by God; but by the middle of the 18th century it had come to mean one who mistakenly believes himself to be so possessed. (The word changed its meaning again, of course, after that.)

There are plenty of similar cases. "Sanctimonious", for example, originally meant "saintly." When the process of ironisation has gone some way but not all the way, you get a "smile-word", such as "respectable" is with us now. When it has gone all the way, "A" has come to mean "not A but believed (by so-and-so) to be A." The word has grown invisible quotation-marks, and it is no longer in our power to remove them.

Among us, most of the fully-ironised words are connected with religion, and the reason is obvious. Few of us now believe in the existence of gods; but in the past almost everyone did, and there are many who still do. We want to be able to talk about these beliefs without having to resort to tiresome periphrases, and without constantly drawing attention to our disagreement with them. The best way to do this is to keep the religious words, but to ironise them; and this is the solution which, quite unconsciously, we have adopted. With us, a word such as "sacred" is fully ironised. "Sacred" now means "not sacred but believed (by so-and-so) to be sacred." It is not in our power, even if our lives depended on it, to mean anything more than this when we use the word.

Suppose that you had undergone an analogous "loss of faith" about science. You have come to believe that nothing in science is known for certain; but almost everyone else remains convinced that there is much in science which *is* certain. You will want to be able to talk about this common opinion (and if you want to write about the history or philosophy of science, you will have to do so); you will want to be able to talk about it without periphrases, and without constantly drawing attention to your disagreement with it. It will, then, be natural to keep the words which connote certainty, such as "irrefutable"; but, just as disbelief in gods tends inevitably to the ironisation of religious words, your disbelief in certainty will inevitably tend to the ironisation of words connoting certainty. In your usage, "irrefutable", for example, will tend to acquire invisible quotation-marks; it will start to mean, "not irrefutable but believed (by so-and-so) to be irrefutable."

And this, of course, was exactly Popper's case. Newton's "laws" of mechanics and gravitation had been believed for 200 years to be known for certain, yet they were not so. Popper and many others concluded that, since Newtonian physics is not certain, nothing is. It was therefore inevitable that words like "irrefutable" should begin, in their usage, to be ironised.

This is why I say that, even when Popper began to write, people's grip had been loosened on the meaning of "irrefutable" and of words like it. Since then, the ironisation of words such as "irrefutable" does not seem to have gone much further, as far as *general* usage is concerned: "irrefutable" has clearly not gone the way of "sacred", or even of "respectable." Among philosophers, on the other hand, the ironised or Popperite use of the word has spread like wildfire. At present, even philosophers who are otherwise uninfluenced by Popper often use "irrefutable" as a smile-word.

AS I KNOW FROM experience, it is uphill work to get them to realise what they are doing. Still, it is not quite impossible. Some of them can still be got to see that while it is, of course, a vice not a virtue that a theory which is not irrefutable should be believed to be so, still, irrefutability (as distinct from "irrefutability") is *a virtue not a vice* in a theory. The unconscious ironisation which has overtaken this word, that is to say, can sometimes even now be brought to consciousness. To this extent, the Popperite transvaluation of all values has proved to be not entirely irreversible.

"Horror victorianorum" & the Anti-Victorian Reaction

PHILOSOPHIES, although they should be judged by intellectual standards, are not purely intellectual productions, but always have their roots in powerful feelings of some kind. If a philosopher systematically exploits language, therefore, it is always for some "reason of the heart." We have seen here something of what Popper's abuses of language were; but what was their emotional fuel?

[7] The things I have been speaking of were done by Popper in German, of course, before they were done in English. But there is no problem about that. You can neutralise success-words in any language. Mark Twain's little joke, for example, is obviously fully translatable into German. In fact, the abuses of language in which philosophers engage are hardly ever of so delicate a nature as not to survive translation into another language.

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Partly, of course, it was the sort of thing which was felt by the fox in Aesop, about the grapes he could not reach. We citizens of the Jazz Age can now neither remember nor imagine the confidence which Western civilisation had for 200 years invested in the finality of Newtonian physics; but it is scarcely possible to exaggerate it. When it came, the shock of disillusion was correspondingly great. To philosophers like Popper, the moral was obvious: such excessive confidence in a scientific theory must never be allowed to build up again. The most "irrefutable" of all such theories has turned out to be not irrefutable at all. Very well then, Popper will say (like the fox in the fable): irrefutability, even if our theories could achieve it, would be a bad thing anyway. The parallel would be complete if the fox, having concluded that neither he nor anyone else could ever succeed in tasting grapes, should nevertheless proceed to write many large books about the progress of viticulture.

This ingredient of the emotional soil of Popperism, the consuming anxiety lest Newtonian *hubris* should ever have a sequel, is obvious: it lies quite close to the surface in Popper's writings. But the most marked peculiarity of his philosophy of science, the impulse to reverse every commonplace of the subject, suggests some feeling deeper than "sour grapes"—something more characteristic of the Jazz Age as a whole. I think it was a case of *horror victorianorum*.

I mean by this the horror which even nowadays is felt, at least to a slight degree, by almost everyone who visits a display of Victorian stuffed birds under glass, or of Victorian dolls and doll's clothes. Such things as these, of course, now communicate at most the *quality* of the horror. They cannot convey anything like the intensity with which it was felt 50 or 60 years ago, or the historical importance of this feeling.

Among literary objects of this horror—the counterparts of stuffed birds—the novels of Dickens were always pre-eminent. For countless people, a single volume of Dickens used to be enough to cause uneasiness, especially if it had old illustrations; a house containing a complete set of Dickens, as millions of houses did, was a nightmare. Evelyn Waugh, with unerring instinct, distilled this particular nightmare in the penultimate chapter of *A Handful of Dust* (1934)—a chapter which to many people who first read it 40 years ago, or more, is to horrible that they will not reread it even now.

THE ORIGINAL CLASSIC expression in literature of *horror victorianorum* was Samuel Butler's *The Way of All Flesh* (1903). This book was, as Malcolm Muggeridge has said, the first hand-grenade thrown over the Victorian garden-wall, before the Freudian heavy-artillery came up; and its curious fate shows indirectly the strength of the horror when it finally arrived. Butler never in his life succeeded in getting any of his many books published, except at his own expense. But twenty years after his death in 1902, this posthumous book became a best seller, and the Bible of a generation. It was, in fact, one of those books which succeed so completely that they make themselves superfluous. Few young people nowadays have heard of the book; but then they do not need to, since it is already in their blood. Samuel Butler, it is worth adding, is one of Popper's enthusiasms.

Literature is only one expression of the enormous revolution in feeling which divides the Jazz Age from the pre-War world. Obviously, I cannot do justice here to that revolution. But I will mention one other expression of it, and one whose historical importance no one will dispute: modern architecture.

It is now impossible, and has been impossible for over 50 years, for anyone to make a building which is beautiful or even agreeable. Whatever may be the reason for it, this is simply an historical fact; like the impossibility of travelling abroad nowadays without a passport, or the fact that in the 12th century no one could make a television set. No one likes to look at a modern building, let alone live or work in it, and hardly anyone now pretends that they do like to. That this long-kept secret is out is thanks in part to Tom Wolfe's *From Bauhaus to Our House* (1982). But Wolfe, besides making unwarranted exceptions to his condemnation (in favour, for example, of the embarrassing Frank Lloyd Wright), is altogether unsatisfactory on one basic point. He has not a word to say in explanation of how modern architecture came to be successfully sold to the world in the first place. It was not under totalitarian governments, after all, that this architecture triumphed: it must therefore have had *something* to offer that people wanted—something, in fact, which they seized on with the energy of desperation. What this was, Wolfe is perhaps too young to have known first-hand, but no one over fifty can possibly be in doubt for one moment as to what it was: escape from *horror victorianorum*.

To go back to the *quale* (as philosophers say) of this horror: it is somewhat as follows. A sensation of darkness, stillness, enclosure, and, above all, of weight or pressure: some indefinite but massive incubus is pressing down on us, and we are about to suffocate. "For God's sake *let in the air and let me out!*" is the most prominent element in the sufferer's reaction.

Many of us feel this kind of horror concerning "relics" of any period and of any kind, at least after a little while. Even this is a very recent thing, and largely confined to the West even so. Medieval pilgrims underwent untold hardships in order to visit religious relics (Jesus's foreskin, luckily preserved at five different places, etc.) which most modern men would pay to avoid visiting even, or rather especially, if they believed the relics to be genuine. It is no different with secular relics: many of us cannot look at such things for long without stifling. "These people are all *dead!*" is our strangled cry. "Let the dead bury their dead: I have a life to live!" This *generalised* horror of relics is not quite confined, perhaps, to the present century: it is evident, for example, late in the last century, in Mark Twain. But with the arrival of the Jazz Age, and focused especially on Victorian relics, whether literary, architectural, or whatever, it suddenly became "an universal shout."

My suggestion is, then, that the main emotional source of Popper's philosophy was *horror victorianorum*. That, I think, is what lay behind his compulsion to turn upside-down every single commonplace which he found standing in the old philosophy of science.

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If it was so, then I for one cannot, after all, refuse Karl Popper a large measure of sympathy. For Victorian writing about science—and that means, in practice, writing up to about 1920—is suffocating enough, in all conscience, to give any citizen of the Jazz Age the horrors. Even now I cannot read Humboldt, or Whewell, or Mill, or Huxley, or Mach, or Jevons, or Duhem, not to mention the legion of less original and therefore more representative writers of the period, without feeling at least some twinges of the horror of which I have been speaking. Yet this is 1985, and I was born in 1927 in a remote colony of the Western world. If, as I suppose, Popper felt the same horror at its height and at the centre, how much more intense must it have been!

What makes Victorian writing about science so peculiarly oppressive? Mainly, it seems to me, three things.

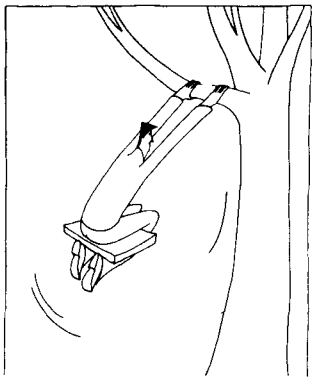
1. The first is that it never lets you forget that nightmare which is Victorian Christianity. Think of the case of Darwin. The discreditable outcry which greeted *The Origin of Species* in 1859 came partly, of course, from Reverends and Right Reverends without number, right up to Samuel Wilberforce, Bishop of Oxford. But it came also, and more importantly, from distinguished scientists with Christian convictions, such as Sir Richard Owen and Adam Sedgwick. The real offence which Darwin had given these people was that his theory, for all its many defects, was at least an obvious improvement on their own brilliant one (that each species originated in a special act of the Divine Will). But they hardly ever said this. What they chose principally to say was that Darwin had "deserted the true method of induction", "abandoned the slow but sure Baconian path"; and *this* they said (as Darwin's son Francis later wrote) *ad nauseam*. Now, would not a prolonged diet of this stuff make a Popperite out of anyone? *Ad nauseam* indeed: what a sickening spectacle! But the Darwinians themselves are scarcely more attractive. They liked to call Wilberforce, behind his back, "Soapy Sam"; for any Jazz Age stomach they are themselves supremely saponaceous. For example, they must have Darwin buried in Westminster Abbey—never mind that this was against his family's wishes, and presumably his own, or that they thereby involved the Dean of Westminster in a scandalous dereliction of his duty, in consenting to the burial there of a person who made no profession of Christian, or of any, religious belief. And the cream of the jest is that their instinct was entirely sound. By 1882 Darwin was in fact a *part* of the Christian religion, or at least a part of that "peculiar institution", the Church of England. Samuel Butler's bitter scoff at Darwin, or rather at the nauseous quality of his fame, is perfectly just: that in him "Science was made flesh, and dwelt among us."

2. The second thing which oppresses the modern reader of Victorian writers on science is their almost-unvarying tone of Whiggery. History is over; the long reign of ignorance and superstition is at an end; the writer, in short, knows everything.

3. Victorian writing about science is almost always semi-popular, and accordingly superficial. The 19th century regarded the 18th as the century of superficiality; but, in the philosophy of science at least, no one in the 19th century took matters as deep as David Hume had taken them a hundred years before. Even John Stuart Mill, who goes as far into the logic of science as almost any of them, published little even in his *Logic* (1843) which could not as easily have appeared in an issue of the *Westminster Review*. Almost none of it is *bad*; almost all of it is good, as far as it goes. But it goes a very little way, at enormous length. Jazz-Age stomachs find it intolerably insipid: an ocean of tepid rice-pudding.

When I try to analyse the *horror victorianorum* as it applies to the literature of science, these three components seem to me to be the main ones: Christianity, Whiggery, and superficiality. And these, I think, are the main things which we of the Jazz Age have against the writings of the preceding century about science.

Restoring a Post-Victorian Balance



If this is so, however, then it is we who are in the wrong. If these are our main complaints, our complaints are frivolous; it is the Victorians who are the responsible adults, and we their irresponsible children, "disdaining to be pleased."

The first of the three complaints is manifestly frivolous. Since about 400 A.D., after all, scarcely any department of intellectual life has been free from the influence of the Christian religion. We must, therefore, simply "divide through" for Christianity.

Then, as to Whiggery. It is certainly true that to hear Macaulay on Bacon, say, or Brougham on optics (or on anything), is to endure no pleasing sound: brass tongue, head, and lungs. But these are mere "individual variations" (as the Darwinians say), and in any case are errors on the right side. Much of what the "modern nervous" reader finds abrasive in 19th-century writers is no more than a masculine and admirable directness. And, when you come right down to it, there simply is no non-Whiggish way of writing, about science or any subject. It is entirely pointless for an author to indulge in general acknowledgments of his liability to error and ignorance; while he cannot, on obvious logical grounds, point out to us *specifically* where he errs or is ignorant. He could, of course, conciliate modern nervousness by putting "It seems to me that . . ." in front of everything he wishes to say. But that is a proceeding equally pointless and vexatious, as well as generating a regress ("It seems to me that it seems to me that . . .") which will prevent him from ever saying anything at all.

Finally, as to superficiality. Well, the history of Western science has been, since about 1600, almost entirely a *success*-story. This is hard luck for Popperites and other bohemian enemies of success; but that is how it is. But not only have we learnt much—we have learnt something even more important: *how to learn*. This is a unique achievement of the

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West, and is the secret of its peculiar dynamism: the Moslem, the Buddhist, the Marxist, the astrologer, et al., are as far as ever from learning it. But the odd thing is that, once you have learnt how to learn, there is hardly anything to it. Almost any drongo (if an Australianism is permitted) can do "normal science." Scientific method really does pretty well reduce, as Francis Bacon said it would, "all wits to a level." And a consequence is that all the essentials of a sound *philosophy* of science really are, after all, rather obvious and superficial. It is no wonder, then, that the Victorians got them right. Ordinary intelligence, playing on as much concrete scientific achievement as there was by (say) 1850, was bound to see them through to a basically sound philosophy of science.

FOR THESE REASONS, I cannot help concluding that, where the literature of science is concerned, *horror victorianorum* —my own or Popper's or anyone's—springs from a fundamental levity. In the old commonplaces of the philosophy of science there is much truth, and scarcely any falsity. They merely require, like any other commonplace wisdom, to be applied in practice with tact. You can, of course, always go deeper if you want to; but some one who wishes, as Popper wished, merely to *reverse* them all is doomed from the outset. He will simply be wrong on the main issues, and his wish is nothing more than a young man's adolescent urge to escape the burden of adult knowledge and responsibilities. Jazz-Age man hath said in his heart, "Let the dead bury their dead." But since the dead cannot bury anything, while someone has to bury the dead, the words which St Matthew attributes to Jesus are but foolish and irresponsible words after all.

It is not only Victorian ideas *about* science which weigh on Jazz-Age man like a nightmare: there is the burden of accumulated scientific knowledge itself. *That* great inheritance from the past, like every other, Jazz-Age man would put off if he could: "Let the dead bury their dead." And he has, in every other respect, come far closer to achieving this ideal than would have been possible in any earlier age. He inherits, and can inherit, nothing or next to nothing of family tradition, of social status, of morality or religion; and he can live, if he wants to, as though there never had been such things in the past. But he cannot live as though there never had been any accumulation of scientific knowledge. He cannot subsist for twenty-four hours without drawing on the fruits of scientific knowledge for his food, light, transport, warmth, and all the rest.

This last and most inescapable burden, too, Popper's philosophy was expressly designed to rid us of. For one theory is better than another, Popper says, other things being equal, if it is more easy to refute than the other; and what is this but to put a premium, in science as in plastic razors, on disposability? The best scientific theory is that one which enables us to avoid most easily the burden of belief which it threatens to impose on us: so says our Jazz-Age philosopher. And just so, the Jazz Age says, the best family policy is that which enables us to avoid most easily the burdens which our parents and our spouses—those other horrifying relics of the past—threaten to impose on us.

It has often been noticed that Popper's philosophy of science appealed, among scientists, to theoretical physicists especially. It is not often noticed, but it is also a fact, that in the Jazz Age these scientists are distinguished from all others by their degree of levity. They are anxious to convey—as chemists, for example, are not—that if it's not fun, it's not physics; they love to borrow words, like "quark", from such anti-Victorian heroes as James Joyce. . . . No doubt this is partly to be explained by the remoteness of their work from everyday applications, and by the extreme strangeness of the theories which they are constantly obliged to entertain. But both the Popperism and the levity of theoretical physicists would be further explained if I am right in tracing the sources of Popper's philosophy back through *horror victorianorum* to a kind of levity which is characteristic of the Jazz Age as a whole.

The Candidate

Behind the red-brick balconies
South London's great indoors
has shut itself against me. Walls
to rush past on a train grow dark
with words I cannot credit.

Alsatians in the flats
let loose chained vehemence
and rumour grey as newsprint
stains old calloused hands.

Tim Dooley

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IN THE MARGIN

Do Ideologies Disintegrate?

By Melvin J. Lasky

THIS CONFERENCE [1] TAKES PLACE in the shadow of George Orwell; or perhaps I should say: in the light of George Orwell. For more than any other writer of our time, more penetrating in his insights and wider in his popular impact, he confronted and countered two of the most fateful ideological follies of contemporary life—utopia and revolution. The utopian dream of an equal and fraternal band of committed comrades became what it invariably becomes . . . a grotesque "*Animal Farm*" in which there is neither equality nor fraternity nor camaraderie. The hopes for a revolutionary social order in which all institutions were to be made anew and human relations were to become utterly transformed developed into a grim and dismal "*1984*", a *dystopia* of total controls in which the human family has become trapped in a cruel and loveless caricature of what is only faintly recognisable as decent and civilised social relationships.

When such utopian dreams and revolutionary hopes are dashed and denied, an ideology always begins to disintegrate. Ideology is devised to hold an insurgent movement together in an attempt to give legitimacy to new power and violence. Whether in animal farms and off-shore islands as imagined by Orwell, or on actual continents and among peoples known to us in the real historical world of the 1980s, we are faced with illusions that crumble and gods that fail.

It has happened so often, in our time and over the centuries, that one must wonder why it always has to happen before we come to know that it will happen, that it must happen, yet again. . . . Is it because there are (as some say) no lessons in history? No, there are such lessons; but there seem to be so few who are willing to learn them. There are, to be sure, an unhappy few who appear to be incorrigible. When utopias turn into nightmares, they will cry that the "real thing" wasn't "really tried." When revolutions become prison camps, they will cry that the revolution was "betrayed" and only they, in their rectitude and righteousness, would have truly fulfilled it. The rationalisations remain unpersuasive.

FOR ALL IDEOLOGIES are unstable and contradictory phenomena. They have a half-life of vague and ambivalent ideals, of romantic and often infantile yearnings, of unreal expectations of perfection and harmony; and they also have another half-life of fanatical power-lusts: to control and dominate, to uproot and to punish, to bring all things into a straight line of a narrow dogmatic orthodoxy. No such ideology can hold together for long. Outside of power it is torn apart by quarrels, arguments, faction fights, intrigue: until all enthusiasm fades. Armed with power, it is soon seen by the people, the "toiling masses" in whose name the great liberation was supposedly made, to be a poor threadbare ideological fiction to cover the corrupt interests of a tyrannical, ruthless ruling class: illiberal by temperament and anti-democratic by habit.

I never heard this truth better put than one afternoon in New York's Grand Central Station. This was many years ago when I was trying to research an article on so-called "Black Power" movements whose current ideologists—almost all quite forgotten today—were called Huey Newton and Stokely Carmichael and Malcolm Little (alias Malik El-Shabazz, later Malcolm *X*). Grand Central Station was the only place where I knew I could get the various Black Power newspapers and brochures, including the weekly *Black Panther*. I bought my supply of reading matter from two lanky leather-jacketed Black enthusiasts who kept chanting through the marble halls, "*All Power to the People!*" As I listened to the sloganeering I found myself standing next to a conventionally-dressed man, with a fine small grey moustache bristling on his tan-brown face; he doubtless then still thought of himself, old-fashionedly, as "*a Negro.*" He turned to me, wryly looking at "Whitey" armed to the teeth with pamphlets, and said, unforgettably—and I can't hope to catch the sonority of his voice nor the tenor of his delicate irony—

> "When they say, '*All Power to the People!*' they mean all-power-to-the-people-who-*SAY*-all-Power-to-the-People!"

IT IS, ALAS, as I have already suggested, a very old story, but since in this time of historical amnesia where everything began only yesterday, or with this morning's headlines and early-bird news-bulletins, I'd like to recall briefly the long, heart-breaking, tragic historical pattern of such breakdowns. For ideology, being a spurious (if often ingenious) mix of inchoate desires and inadequate ideas, must always disintegrate; it can "*integrate*" only for a moment, a summer, a season, a brief excited political event. Then its own realities—and the realities of the external world to which it addresses itself so faultily—tear it apart. . . .

[1] Opening remarks to the London "*Beyond 1984*" Conference on "Communism and Liberal Democracy" (chairman: Lord Chalfont), held at the Royal Garden Hotel in mid-March. Other speakers included Norman Podhoretz (see his article in the next ENCOUNTER), Leszek Kolakowski, Anthony Quinton, Jeane Kirkpatrick, Irving Kristol, Leopold Labedz, Richard Perle, Midge Decter, Vladimir Bukowsky, Frank Chapple and Jean-François Revel.

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A handful of quick examples of the moment of disenchantment.

The year is 1658: the Cromwell dictatorship is beginning to crumble. The King (Charles II, still in France) is preparing his return for the "Restoration." John Milton is working hard on last, desperate schemes to save the faltering Puritan Revolution. But he and all the enthusiasts know that for one bitter reason or another, things have gone badly wrong—little has gone right since their ideas triumphed ten years earlier. One group of disenchanted Levellers puts pen to paper, determined to "*discover* [as they say] *where it was that we first turned aside*. . . ." They know themselves: "We were ingenious to pluck up, but we have no skill to plant; we were strong to destroy, but we are weak to restore. . . ." And this is the haunting cry of a disintegrated ideology still poignant after more than three centuries:

> "How have our hopes been blasted! how have our expectations been disappointed! how have our ends been frustrated! . . . how are they withered in a night! how are they vanished, and come to nothing! . . . We have sown the wind, and we have reaped a whirlwind; we have sown faction, and we have reaped confusion; we have sown folly, and we have reaped deceit; when we looked for liberty, behold slavery! when we expressed righteousness, behold oppression! when we sought for justice, behold a cry, a great and lamentable cry throughout the nation!"[2]

Perhaps the English learned their lesson well. But in the next century or two it was the French who tried to establish an "Ideal Commonwealth", pure and perfect, a Republic of Virtue. And when the Jacobins and the Girondins, the Mountain and the Convention, failed abjectly, we find the Terror catching up with Tom Paine (arrested in Paris and only accidently escaping the guillotine) and also turning against that other inspiration of "Revolution for Progress", Condorcet. And Condorcet, before he was found mysteriously dead in his prison cell, began to make notes on a disintegrated ideology, on the "political charlatans" and "*l'ivresse du pouvoir*" (the drunkenness of power).[3]

The belated recognition of the old lesson was not lost on thinkers like Benjamin Constant, Mme de Staël, and Tocqueville, all champions of liberal democracy. But even those most eloquent of warnings—against making a fetish of bloody uprisings which only bring violent putschists into power—did not prevent a "disintegrated ideology" from re-integrating itself by 1848 when Marx and Engels, with their doctrinal eloquence, gave the theory and practice of totalist doctrines a new historical lease of life. How long, O brethren, would one now have to wait for the ideology to break down again, to disintegrate under the weight of its own contradictions and the pressure of brutal events which expose its failings?

IT IS, I THINK, IMPORTANT to remind ourselves that in history, in the record of the past, we have something like a flashingly sensitive "Early Warning System." A signal warning was given to Karl Marx himself by an associate of his in the 1840s:

> ". . . Let us not, because we are at the head of a new movement, make ourselves the leaders of a new intolerance; let us not pose as the apostles of a new religion, even if it be the religion of logic, of reason. Let us welcome and encourage all protests, and condemn all exclusiveness. . . . Never let us think of any questions as closed. . . ."

And he went on to predict (in 1848) that a communist system would only have

> ". . . the appearance of being founded on the dictatorship of the masses, but in which the masses have no more power than is necessary to ensure a general serfdom in accordance with the following precepts and principles borrowed from the old absolutism: indivisibility of public power; all-consuming centralisation; systematic destruction of individual, corporative and regional thought (regarded as disruptive); inquisitorial police. . . ."[4]

THERE IS (to use Plato's phrase) a "lie in the soul" of ideology, and here it was exposed once again . . . and once again, alas, only for a season, for a generation. Would *young* men remember? would *all* old men even reconsider? Flaubert doubted it, Dostoevsky scoffed at the very idea.

Shortly before he died, Alexander Herzen wrote to Mikhail Bakunin, not long before the uprising of the Paris Commune of 1871. The document is called "*To an Old Comrade*", and we have here another classic instance of a disintegrating ideology, when old comrades always fall out among each other. Herzen minced few words with Bakunin. The "passion for destruction" was not, and could never be, "creative." Revolutions could lose their way, could stumble, and regress. Believers and fanatics have a penchant for

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[2] The Leveller letter of 1658 is quoted in my book *Utopia and Revolution* (Macmillan; University of Chicago Press; 1976), pp. 426-7, from Clarendon's *History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England* (1702-4), Vol. 6, pp. 70-75.

[3] On Condorcet, see the books by J. Salwyn Schapiro, *Condorcet and the Rise of Liberalism* (1934); Léon Cahen, *Condorcet et la révolution française* (1904); K. M. Baker, *Condorcet* (1975); and Rolf Reichardt, *Reform und Revolution bei Condorcet* (Bonn, 1973).

If there was a full *mea culpa* involved here, many critics have suggested it was a case of a disenchanted "totalitarian." See: Eric Voegelin's *From Enlightenment to Revolution* (1975). Friedrich Hayek, in an old essay, cites the following remark by Condorcet, from a discourse celebrating the destruction of papers relating to the history of noble families in France:

> "Today Reason burns the innumerable volumes which attest the vanity of a castle. Other vestiges remain in public and private libraries. They must be involved in a common destruction."

On the much-neglected episode in Tom Paine's life, see the account in my book *Utopia and Revolution*, pp. 558-62. On his arrest in Paris by his Jacobin associates (as a "false friend of our revolution"), Paine said: "Imprisonment with preservation of character is preferable to liberty with disgrace."

[4] The passages quoted are from Proudhon (about whose own theories, ironically enough, much the same indictment could be made). Proudhon to Marx, 17 May 1846, in *Les confessions d'un révolutionnaire* (1849; ed. Rivière, 1929), pp.435-6.

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accusations and punishments; but *force* will not improve institutions. Evolution, not revolution, was Herzen's message to Bakunin; not fear and terror, but "amicable agreements" and "gradual progress." And one pre-Orwellian sentence of his rings down across the century;

> ". . . But we view the question differently. You tear along, as before, filled with the passion of destruction which you take for a creative passion . . . respecting only the history of the future. I do not believe in the old revolutionary paths. . . ." [5]

History has many cunning passages, and I leave you with a last, perhaps the most cunning passage of all, for it comes out of the hot Russian summer of 1917 when a re-integrated ideology enthuses enough militants to bring Lenin and his Bolsheviks into power—and to establish just such a new society against which we have so often been forewarned: a truculent, intolerant, absolutist, centralised, and thought-controlling police-state. It could be seen coming in the summer of 1917, and one brilliant Russian editor, putting out a radical weekly called *Novaya Zhizn* ("New Life"), perceived it clearly. He saw a pattern of political terrorism and murder emerging. He saw crime being justified and legitimised. He exposed the growing conspiracy against free speech. He warned against those "Napoleons of socialism", Lenin and Trotsky; and just before he was forced to abandon his publication and the democratic interlude was over, he predicted (this is November 1917!) "The Russian people will pay for this with lakes of blood. . . . What does Lenin risk if the experiment should fail? . . ." It was a murderous vision of how a dream of reason and revolution was already producing monsters; and he could deal with it only with unpleasant irony.

> ". . . For the welfare of the Russian people even a million persons could be killed. Why shouldn't they be killed? There are many people in Russia and there are plenty of murderers. . . ." [6]

Here, then, is an Ideology—and in the beginning is its end—which has always been seen as flawed and suspect. Who but the naive, waiting to be fooled, would believe in a utopia of benevolent commissars? and who but the commissars, lusting to rule, would ever gain by violent revolution? It is a utopian-revolutionary idealogy which has been disintegrating throughout all of modern history. Sometimes, as in the past, because its words have been deceptive, its arguments specious, its promises delusive. But sometimes—as is, massively, the case today—because the "real-existing" system for which it is supposed to be the explanation and rationalisation shows mortal signs of Continent-wide disintegration. Flaws in logic and ethics are as nothing when compared to cracks in an empire, when masses are disaffected, nations alienated, communal religions outraged. I am afraid it is no longer a problem for self-critical intellectualising. Not mere "super-structures", but foundations themselves are in tremor.

[5] The four letters "To an Old Comrade" (1869) can be found in the 1948 Moscow edition (Stalin's censors must've been nodding!) of Alexander Herzen, *Selected Philosophical Works*, pp. 576-595.

[6] My reference here is to Maxim Gorky, whose tragedy it was to go into exile and subsequently to return to the USSR, to become reconciled to Stalin, and to perish in the Stalinist purges of 1936. My quotations from *Novaya Zhizn* are taken from Herman Ermolaev's edition of Maxim Gorky, *Untimely Thoughts: Essays on Revolution, Culture, and the Bolsheviks* (1971).

The O in Shakespeare explained

Sometimes a writer turns
His eye to the whole of his subject
Or a whole subject apart from it
O is the word for it.

This book against a stream, a flood
A sky of stars that process
Any digression as long as it is large
O is the word for it.

A hundred thousand blades of field
And it held whole in all detail
A wheel of birds that sagas make
O is the word for it.

And Shakespeare's head beginning to ache
For sure the play is a sandwich
And slippery as eel or heart
O is the word for it.

Elizabeth Smither

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LETTERS

Kristol's NATO

ONE CAN UNDERSTAND Irving Kristol's impatience ("A Transatlantic 'Misunderstanding'", ENCOUNTER, March) with the attitude of the European allies over United States policy in Central America, but it leads him to make some very odd remarks about the nature and origins of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation.

Mr Kristol suggests that any concern with the geographical limits imposed by Article VI in considering the mutual obligations imposed by the North Atlantic Treaty is "legalistic." (This article defined the *casus foederis* as arising out of "an armed attack on the territory of any of the Parties in Europe or North America, on the Algerian departments of France, on the occupation forces of any Party in Europe, on the islands under the jurisdiction of any Party in the North Atlantic area north of the Tropic of Cancer or on the vessels or aircraft in this area of any of the Parties.") This article, like all the others in the Treaty, was drafted with great care and some difficulty, in order to express as clearly as possible precisely what the signatories meant. What it did *not* mean was that the United States and Canada would underwrite French policy everywhere in North Africa, or British policy in the Middle East, or Dutch policy in the East Indies. Equally it did *not* mean, as Mr Kristol suggests, that

> "since the United States was the largest and most powerful member of the alliance and had made the most extraordinary commitment . . . the nations of Western Europe would naturally be deferential towards American policy in such a non-NATO area as the western hemisphere."

If it is true, as Mr Kristol states, that "the American people have always interpreted the NATO alliance in this light", then they have been quite shockingly misled by their leaders and by such publicists as Mr Kristol himself. Treaties mean exactly what they say, and those who draft them go to a great deal of trouble to say exactly what they mean.

Beyond the carefully-formulated letter of the Treaty, allies owe to one another, not "deference", but good judgment. The United States was not "deferential" to Britain and France during the Suez crisis of 1956. She did everything short of using armed force to haul them back from the brink of disaster, and it was a very good thing that she did. Nor were the allies "deferential" over the American involvement in Viet Nam. They made quite clear their disagreement with United States policy and wisely refused to allow themselves to be sucked into that maelstrom. No one would deny that the United States have a unique interest in Central America. But if the European allies are worried by the current trends in American policy towards that region—and it is significant how many of us are—then it is our duty as friends, if not as allies, to say so quite frankly, adding our voices to those of all the many well-informed Americans who flatly disagree with Mr Kristol's diagnosis.

"Deference" has no place in alliance politics outside the Warsaw Pact. If we see a friend walking somnambulistically over a precipice, we try to stop him. We do not link arms for auld lang syne and jump as well.

MICHAEL HOWARD

Regius Professor
of Modern History
Oxford

I AM NOT SURPRISED that Professor Howard should disagree with my article, but I am surprised that this disagreement should be expressed in what is, in effect, a solicitor's brief. That literary genre does not strike me as being very useful for a discussion of foreign policy.

The implication of Professor Howard's argument is that the United States would have been perfectly within its rights, under the NATO treaty, in refusing to assist Britain during the Falklands Islands conflict, since the Falklands are well south of the Tropic of Cancer. Indeed, pursuing that same legalistic train of thought, the United States could have rendered assistance to Argentina, to which action the British government would have had no grounds for complaint.

Quite so. But I wonder if the British people would have been content with any such explanation for such an American action. Would NATO really have remained unaffected?

The truth is that treaties of alliance never do "mean exactly what they say." Unless they mean more than they say—unless the spirit is more expansive than the letter—such treaties are likely, under the pressure of unforeseen events, to become void of substance.

I also disagree with Professor Howard about Suez. I thought at the time, and in retrospect believe it even more strongly, that American policy should indeed have been "deferential" to the Franco-British action. The Middle East would be a less bloody and turbulent area today, had we done so.

IRVING KRISTOL

New York City

Genoa, Corrected

IN ENCOUNTER (February, p.14) you quote a leader of *The Times* which states:

> "Since the Geneva Conference of 1922 Soviet officials have been currying western economic assistance to make up for their strategic weaknesses . . . etc.

That should certainly read "the *Genoa* Conference"!

RICHARD R. KATZ

Jerusalem

Losing Your Marbles

WOULD IT BE unfair to describe Richard Cottrell (recreations: real ale, travel, and "transport studies") as something of a hit-and-run driver? What else is one to make of a polemicist as snide and vindictive as his piece "Mme Mercouri & Elgin's Marbles" (ENCOUNTER, March) shows him to be? And how extraordinary that this diatribe should purport to "balance" the view so soberly put by Professor Thurstan Shaw.

In point of fact, Mr Cottrell barely addresses himself to the issues immediately surrounding the fate of the Marbles. And when he does, he proves himself to be as out of touch as his overdecorated rhetoric would suggest.

Item: There is no longer, nor has there been for at least two years, any thought of a completely "new museum", but rather an existing neo-classical building at the foot of the Acropolis has already been designated and purchased and will eventually be extended to house *all* objects from the Acropolis Monuments.

Item: Mme Mercouri reiterated in Paris only in February the consistent position she has taken, that the Parthenon Marbles are exceptional, indeed unique, and that (pace Dr Wilson) there can be no question of the Venus de Milo or any other free-standing sculpture being requested.

Item: The Greek government has instituted radical short-term measures to reduce pollution in Athens and long-term plans to combat it systematically. But all of this is just too inconvenient to fit Mr Cottrell's approach.

As for Mme Mercouri herself, her

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political record shows a kind of grit and courage not so far required of your contributor. To disparage her by comments on her appearance only cheapens him and his argument. Yet if one goes through his piece deleting the errors, the jeers, the insinuations and the clever-clever twaddle, there is nothing left of it in the end anyway, except a recognition of the "perfect validity" (his own phrase) of the fundamental arguments in favour of the return of these intrinsic parts of a great building.

GRAHAM BINNS
Deputy Chairman

METHINKS I detect a direct hit on the Philhellene "academic unworldliness" of the British Committee for the Restoration of the Parthenon Marbles.

Mr Binns is clearly much roused by what I wrote, but still has nothing to say on how a campaign conducted in the present manner by the Greek Government in general, and Mme Mercouri in particular, will end in the Marbles actually going home. The excitable contribution from Mr Binns is much in the style of Mme Mercouri: if he wants his committee to win more support he would be well advised to calm down. On the question of Athens—where I spend, by the way, up to a week every month—I can already hear the hoots of derision from suffering Athenians over this talk of "radical short-term measures" initiated by the Greek Government to clean the place up. My interest in "transport studies" tells me that traffic chaos and pollution is worsening. There has been some inconsequential tinkering with the problem, but only massive investment offers a real cure. There is a linkage, whether Mr Binns cares to admit it or not, between the appalling state of Athens and the future of one of the finest experiments in architecture the world has seen.

RICHARD COTTRELL MEP

European Parliament
Brussels
The British Committee for the Restoration of the Parthenon Marbles
London

The Brecht-Luxemburg Syndrome

IT IS NOT surprising—as your various correspondents writing about the German peace movement, and especially the personality of the genuinely famous (i.e., it's been longer than Andy Warhol's prescribed 15 minutes) Miss Petra Kelly (see ENCOUNTER, November 1984, February 1985)—that certain current clichés and contemporary fashions should prevail.

A young girl, daughter of an American GI (named Lehmann) returns to Germany and finds a new cause (in the USA she was apparently a patriotic drum-majorette). Whom should she turn to to find a "favourite author" but Bert Brecht? (Nobody in this generation goes in for Goethe or Schiller or Fontane.) Whom should she quickly learn to revere but Rosa Luxemburg?

Maybe the German tradition is short on heroic (and adorable) figures, but the cult of "Red Rosa" is by now a bit on the grotesque side. Here is a woman, who, it is true, did perish under tragic circumstances (murdered by Right-wing fanatics in Berlin in 1919); but as a Communist revolutionary she spent her life devoted to a Marxist cause which was as wrong as it was hopeless. Decades were devoted to "proving" that the economic contradictions of "late Capitalism" were so severe that it was about to collapse and give way to a new revolutionary order. If that wasn't an absurd (and boring) enough undertaking, she spent additional years in proving that Poland (where she was born in a Jewish *shtetl*) was not really a true and worthy nation and should not, and could not, ever survive. (See, on this point, the masterful dissection of Luxemburg's "ideas" in Leszek Kolakowski's third volume of his *Marxism*.)

Still, the Brecht-Luxemburg syndrome in contemporary German obsessiveness can be found in even stranger circles. Miss Kelly's "comrade-in-arms", if such there be in a peace movement, is the retired German General, Gert Bastian. No American naivety here, no schoolgirlish enthusiasm. At the age of 18 he had volunteered for service in the wartime *Wehrmacht*. He later commanded a West German *Panzer* division, and was for many years a member of Franz Josef Strauss's *CSU* party. No, General Bastian is cut of quite different cloth. But whom do you think he finds to be his "*favourite poet*"? None other than B. Brecht again. And whom do you think he finds to be "*a heroine of history*"? Here comes Rosa Luxemburg again. (I take this from his replies to the *FAZ* questionnaire, in its Magazine of 15 February 1985.) As the punster put it, when in the syndrome, do as the syndromans do.

It's still the biggest bandwagon rolling in our country today. Will things ever change? When comes the *Trendwende*? The first one that jumps off the bandwagon and sings a verse of Wolfgang von der Vogelweide and offers a passing thought on behalf of, say, Erasmus, or Don Carlos, or Mme de Staël, may look odd and sound funny—but it could be the beginning of the biggest thing in German culture since sliced pumpernickel.

HANS-MARTIN WALTHER

Berlin

Adlai Stevenson's "Eggheads"

I READ the little Life & Letters item (Alan Williams, in ENCOUNTER, April) about eggheads and intellectuals and what Adlai Stevenson is supposed to have said: "Eggheads of the world unite—you have nothing to lose but your yolks."

Not much of a "yolk" for a reputedly very witty man.

But actually his famous joke ran somewhat differently. As I heard it, he said (rephrasing Lenin's notorious crack about the revolution not being able to make an omelette without "breaking eggs"):

> "You can't make an omelette without breaking eggheads."

Alan Williams may not like intellectuals, but as Adlai Stevenson knew, they paid a beat-up price in the revolutionary scramble.

JOHN T. LEWIS

New York

No Irish Joke

THE MASS OBSTRUCTION by a hundred Irish MPs in 1901 is a splendid picture conjured up by Edward Pearce ("Lords, Cameras, & Hooligans", ENCOUNTER, March). What a pity that the actual number was only 12 (7 March 1901). But who cares for accuracy when 'tis only Ireland?

CHARLES DAVIDSON

Kealkil
Co. Cork

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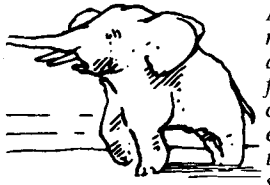

Baltimore, Maryland

ANIMAL FARM: *A group of Black ministers is asking the city to move an African village exhibit away from the Baltimore Zoo, contending the location of the exhibit is insulting. The placing of the exhibit reinforces racist stereotypes of Blacks as jungle animals.*

The exhibit is a replica village with Black dancers who perform in grass skirts and bare feet, an African dwelling, court pavilion, and a rice kitchen enclosed in a fence of sticks. The display includes artifacts sent from Gbarnga in Liberia, Baltimore's sister city in West Africa.

"We are not opposed to the exhibit itself. We are opposed to the location of the exhibit. To put this exhibit in the midst of caged animals is in exquisitely bad taste."

Exhibit organisers argue that the Zoo is an ideal location for the display, and that the village is enhanced by the proximity to animals indigenous to Africa.

SAUDI GAZETTE (A.P.)

London

THREESOME: **Newton Minow, the outspoken former chairman of America's Federal Communications Commission, who once described broadcasting in America as "a clamorous casbah of commercials which plead, bleat, pressure, whistle, groan and shout" has turned his astringent wit in a quite different direction.**

Addressing a recent convention of lawyers, Minow came up with the following comparison of three national legal systems:

> **"In Germany everything is prohibited except that which is permitted. In France everything is permitted except that which is prohibited; and in the Soviet Union everything is prohibited, including that which is permitted."**

DAILY TELEGRAPH

Paris

COMÉDIE FRANÇAISE: **While clipped Oxford English has a certain snob appeal in Europe, American English is making inroads. In France, some school systems are using Marx Brothers and Laurel and Hardy films to teach the language. No longer do Europeans automatically agree with the joke in "My Fair Lady" that Americans haven't spoken English for years.**

U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT

Brussels

IN BAD TASTE: *European Foreign Ministers weary after the long negotiations over the entry of Spain and Portugal into the Community had better not console themselves with a glass of British sherry.*

The Spaniards have declared that as a condition of entry; they want the term phased out. The only **"true sherry"**, *they say, comes from Jerez. The sweet and sticky substance sold as British sherry and made from imported grape juice is unworthy to hold the name. But Britain is standing firm.*

If he gets a chance at the four-day marathon session of Foreign Ministers in Brussels, Sir Geoffrey Howe will point out forcefully that the British sherry industry has been flourishing for more than 100 years and employs 2,000 people. There is absolutely no chance of Britain agreeing to abandon the name.

It is unlikely that Sir Geoffrey has ever sampled a glass of the brew he will defend so stoutly, unless he was a regular attender of ghastly undergraduate parties at Cambridge. But he will be in a stronger position than the Irish Foreign Minister, who will be defending the use of the term "Irish sherry"—even though no Irish sherry is at present manufactured.

One British diplomat suggested last week that if the Spanish are really so unhappy, they should rename their own aperitif **"Jerez"**, *after the town where it is made.* **"Sherry"** *is an English word derived from Jerez, and as such cannot logically be claimed by Spain.*

THE OBSERVER

London

JOHN LEFTLEY, *a 29-year old accountant from Hounslow, London, was bound over in the sum of £200 to keep the peace for a year when he appeared at Horseferry Road Magistrates Court yesterday.*

He admitted causing a breach of the peace when he ran on to the pitch during Chelsea's 3-2 second-leg defeat by Sunderland.

Leftley was alleged to have told police officers who arrested him:

> **"I have spent six years watching that ——— bastard Walker, then he goes and scores two goals against us."**

DAILY MAIL

London

THE ART OF BLUE-PENCILLING: *Chelsea thug John Leftley said last night he planned to apologise to Sunderland ace Clive Walker for trying to punch him. Leftley, who spent the night in the cells after being arrested, had told police:*

> **"I have spent six years watching that b*****d Walker, then he goes and scores two goals against us."**

THE SUN

Duisburg

ABCDEFGHI
abcdefghij

ALPHA SI, BETA NON: **Parents may christen their child "*Alpha*", a Duisburg Court ruled last week. A local Justice of the Peace had refused to record the name "*Sebastian Alpha*", chosen by a couple for their firstborn, because "*Alpha*" does not appear on the list of officially recognised names. But the Court accepted this nationwide first in nomenclature because the family had cited "religious and personal" reasons for their choice.**

The parents had quoted Chapter 21, Verse 6, of the Old Testament Book of Revelation, in which the Lord says: "*I am the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end.*" Thus, the Court asserted, the appellants' desire to use this name was neither ridiculous nor grotesque.

At the same time, however, the judges ruled that it would be a violation of children's rights if the parents labelled subsequent progeny *Beta* through *Omega*. Citing names like *Joshua*, the Court also rejected the contention by the Justice of the Peace that because it ends in "*a*", "*Alpha*" is a feminine word and thus unsuitable as a boy's name.

The Court added that since "*Alpha*" does not sound like a number, it does not reduce its bearer to a mere cipher.

THE WEEK IN GERMANY (Bonn)

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The Ecologist

Journal of the post-industrial Age
Worthyvale Manor Farm, Camelford, Cornwall, UK. PL32 9TT

The latest special issue (Vol 14, No 5/6, 1984) includes:

Large-Scale Dams: A Special Report

L Alexis
The Damnation of Paradise—Sri Lanka's Mahaweli Project
Sri Lanka's giant Mahaweli Scheme will soon be completed. Five dams will turn the majestic Mahaweli River into a sluggish and silt-laden river. The project has already destroyed much of the country's dwindling forest cover. Reports from the resettlement schemes portray a picture of social misery and malnutrition.

Briefing Document
The Social and Environmental Effects of Large Dams
This month's Digest is devoted to a review of the adverse effects of large dams and water projects. It includes material on resettlement problems, water-borne diseases, the myth of flood control, the connection between earthquakes and dams, the extent of salinisation and the inevitability of sedimentation.

Edward Goldsmith
Nicholas Hildyard
The Myth of the Benign Superdam
It has been argued that large dams are not *per se* destructive, and that if certain conditions are rigourously followed the benefits will far outweigh the costs. In practice, the benign superdam has proved a myth, large dams are inevitably destructive.

Edward Goldsmith
Nicholas Hildyard
The Politics of Damming
For politicians the world over, dams are the ultimate prestige projects. Political considerations override ecological and social concerns. The Aswan Dam is a case in point—but the authors provide many other examples.

Feature Articles

James Krohe
Illinois—The US Bread-Basket. Where has all the soil gone?
Illinois now ranks as the foremost producer of corn and soyabean of all US States. But the once farmed forests and prairies of Illinois have long gone, leaving a vulnerable and eroding soil. Moreover soil conservation practices, brought into play after the Dust Bowl era, are again being abandoned in the pursuit of profits. Eroding soil messes up waterways and acts as a carrier of pollutants including pesticides. On the other hand, Krohe is concerned that reduced tillage methods to conserve soil, while reducing cost, may lead to more chemical pollution. More traditional approaches to cropping are required.

Warwick Fox
Deep Ecology: A New Philosophy of our Time?
The Philosopher Arne Naess, defines Deep Ecology as that in which all organisms including humans are part of a total field, not separate nor even discrete from the rest of nature. Compared with Shallow Ecology in which humans are deemed above nature, deep ecology strives to give a non-anthropocentric view. Deep ecology thus fits in with notions of Gaia, and with those of the concepts of the nature of Matter as derived from quantum physics.

Arne Naess
Intuition, Intrinsic Value and Deep Ecology
The Norwegian philosopher suggests that a strait jacketing of the term Deep Ecology to achieve a strict meaning is not important in the sense that divergent premises may lead to similar, general conclusions, which can then help to govern human thought and behaviour.

Warwick Fox
On Guiding Stars to Deep Ecology
An answer to Naess. We should be looking to changing our underlying perception of the way things are, rather than to broadening the base of environmental ethics.

Henryk Skolimowski
Information—Yes, but where has all our wisdom gone?
The modern world has embarked on a craze of gathering and storing information. But the quality of thought behind the collation and use of that information has hardly been questioned; wisdom as well as freedom and responsibility have all gone out of the door. What remains in the information society is a dull, unimaginative, a-responsible people.

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Translated by Lydia G. Cochrane

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